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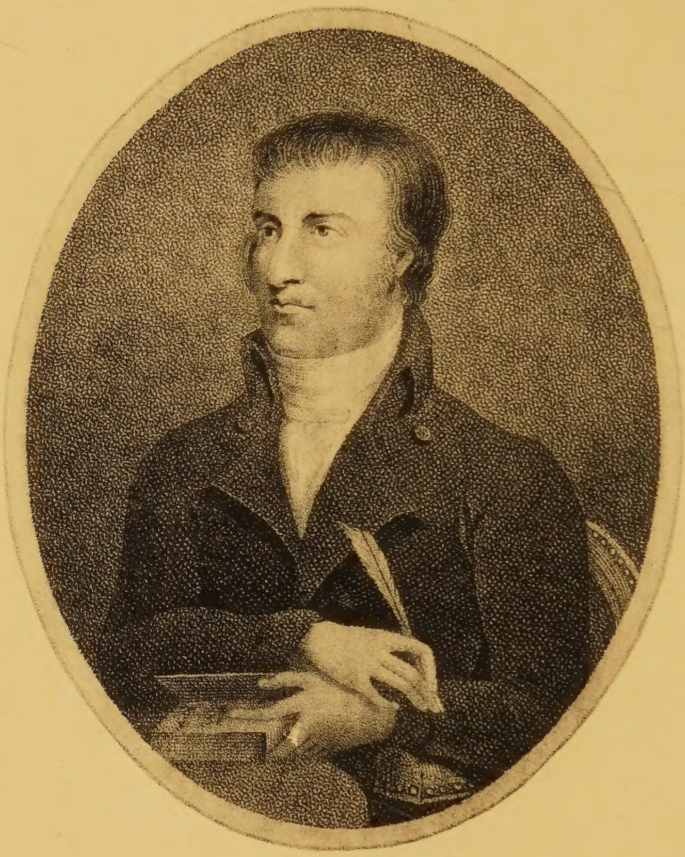
THE PRINCE OF PICKPOCKETS



PORTRAIT OF BARRINGTON
From the frontispiece to his
Voyage to New South Wales (1802)

THE PRINCE OF PICKPOCKETS

A STUDY OF GEORGE BARRINGTON
WHO LEFT HIS COUNTRY
FOR HIS COUNTRY'S GOOD

BY

RICHARD S. LAMBERT

'And sure, in Filch, I shall be quite at home.
Unrivall'd there, none will dispute my claim
To high pre-eminence, and exalted fame.'
THE BARRINGTON PROLOGUE

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R. S. L.

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From the frontispiece to *The Memoirs of George Barrington, containing Every Remarkable Circumstance, etc.*

CHAPTER I

THE 'PRENTICE HAND (1755–1773)

THE latter part of the eighteenth century was an age of Enterprise. The great captains of industry, the Arkwrights, Oldknows and Owens, who began life with little capital but much brains, and ended it in our books and public statues, have had their virtues told by moralists, economists, and reformers. But in the house of Enterprise there are many mansions ; and the finding of an occasional skeleton in one of its cupboards may increase the rentable value of the whole premises to tenants in search of a thrill. This is the story of an obscure Irishman who, so readers will, I think, agree at the end, might have become a prosperous man of business, a respected public servant, or even a successful lawyer or politician. He had personality, wit, a ready tongue, and a methodical habit of life. But he chose to enter a profession in which society cannot allow success. The coarse, incompetent and generally cowardly highwaymen of the early part of the eighteenth century have undeservedly become the heroes of schoolboys and the lay-figures of romance-makers. But here we have a veritable villain who disdained force and practised to perfection urbanity and refinement;

who penetrated the society of princes and peers and was accepted as their companion and equal; who pursued theft with the same persistence and versatility as another man might pursue trade; and who never made an enemy and never admitted defeat. His life is a life that could only occur in a period of transition or revolution. It is full of glaring contrasts and grotesque paradoxes. Society cannot make up her mind how to treat such a man; at one moment she behaves with absurd lenity, the next with vengeful savagery, towards him. At the end comes recantation and reform—and then oblivion. The man to whose trials the aristocracy flocked as regularly as to the play—and with more certain hope of amusement—was utterly forgotten by posterity, except (paradox of paradoxes) as the author of two verses which he never wrote.

> True patriots all: for, be it understood,
> We left our country for our country's good.

Barrington, I fancy, would have liked to have gone down to history undisturbed as the creator of this epigram. But the tale of his real exploits will more than make good any loss of reputation he may suffer among the shades, from having to admit that he could not steal poetry, at any rate, undetected!

The life of George Barrington falls into three almost exactly equal periods. During the first he was growing up and undergoing the experiences which cut him adrift from home and the good prospects of an honest life that lay before him. During the second he was in the full course of his career as a profes-

sional pickpocket, at odds with society and falling again and again into the clutches of the law, until his ruin was complete. During the third he was in Australia, leading a new life, shaking off the incubus of his previous crimes, and becoming a respected pioneer in the greatest of modern colonial ventures. The record of such a life is necessarily fuller for its central period than for either of its two extremes. Notoriety lives longer in human memory than respectability, and the story of Barrington's escapades in London, so intimately connected with the persons and fortunes of many of the dignitaries of his day, were thought more worthy of record and of publication than the personal details, edifying no doubt but slightly dull, of his subsequent repentance and redemption. Fortunately, Barrington himself partly bridged the gap by his copious accounts of the voyage to New South Wales and the early settlements there; but what his readers wanted to hear about in these books were the marvels and wonders of the new continent and its natives much more than a mere personal narrative. So it comes about that, while Barrington supplies a plentiful jumble of information concerning the early history of New South Wales, we know less about him personally during this last Australian period of his life than we know of him in his disgraceful London prime. The same holds good at the other end of his life, though for a different reason. No doubt there were plenty of persons curious to find out where Barrington had come from, and how he had drifted into the profes-

sion of picking pockets. But information on these points could be supplied by no one but Barrington himself; and it was not at all to his interest to gratify such curiosity. Accounts of his personal affairs were best kept elastic, in order that they could be adjusted to conform with any circumstances under which they might have to be produced before a magistrate. In short, Barrington was a liar; and for this reason he has left us several more or less irreconcilable accounts of his early youth.

At the time of his last trial and sentence to transportation in 1790, he gave out his age as 32, and several sketches of his career are extant based upon the chronology which this implies. It was natural policy on his part to represent himself to be as young as possible, in order to win the sympathy of judge and jury. But if he was born in 1758, this hardly leaves time for him to have become a proficient pickpocket, capable of the most daring schemes, by 1775. And further, the preface to his own *Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, which went into several editions, gives the date of his birth as 1755;[1] by the time of its publication Barrington had no incentive to falsify his age, and the fact that this preface explicitly declares that he had made a wrong statement at the time of his trial, is conclusive in favour of the earlier date. On the other hand, there is no particular reason why he should have gone out of his way to lie about the month when he was born; his own statement at the trial mentions October; and we may therefore, with reasonable

certainty, aver that he was born some time in October, in the year 1755.[2]

The various accounts of his life agree that his home was situated about 20 miles west of Dublin, at Maynooth, in Co. Kildare. But whether he was actually born at Maynooth, or near Rush[3] on the coast north of Dublin, is not quite clear. His reputed father was certainly a working silversmith named Henry Waldron ; and his mother's maiden name was Naish (or Naith). She had been living under the roof of a milliner named Winters at Drogheda when she was seduced by Waldron at an early age. But before she married Waldron she is said to have had an affair with a Captain Barrington, belonging to a marching regiment quartered at Rush, and to have born him a son.[4] If this is true, it would explain whence George derived the surname which he adopted throughout life. The same account states that Captain Barrington was transferred to America soon after George's birth, but did not altogether forget his son, sending home from time to time 'the most exact and liberal remittances of which his income would admit'.

Maynooth was a new town, recently built by the Duke of Leinster upon his estate, according to a regular plan, and with good houses, to encourage settlement. It lay on the edge of the Bog of Allen, adjacent to the Duke's seat at Carton, which was described by Arthur Young in his *Tour in Ireland* as 'a vast lawn, which waves over gentle hills, surrounded by plantations of great extent, and which

break and divide in places so as to give much variety. A large but gentle vale winds through the whole, in the bottom of which a small stream has been enlarged into a fine river, which throws a cheerfulness through most of the scenes. . . . The park spreads on every side in fine sheets of lawn, kept in the highest order by 1,100 sheep, scattered over with rich plantations, and bounded by a large margin of wood, through which is a riding.'[5] In these beautiful surroundings young Barrington was brought up. His mother continued to work at her trade as a mantua-maker, and occasionally acted as a midwife. Both she and Waldron were industrious, well-behaved and generally respected. They would have been prosperous too, but for a protracted lawsuit into which they entered to recover from a relative some legacy to which they thought themselves entitled. This lawsuit heavily taxed their resources, and prevented them from giving Barrington much in the way of education.[6] At the age of 6 or 7, however, he was taught to read and write; and a few years later, probably at the age of 12, he was sent to Dublin and apprenticed to an apothecary named Jones, who undertook to train him in the business of a surgeon-apothecary and man-midwife.[7]

This was the only practical training for respectable life that Barrington received, and it served him well, for he picked up from it just enough knowledge to enable him to pose ever after as a surgeon by profession. During his apprenticeship he is said to have shown a penchant for 'constructing chirurgical

instruments',[8] running after the most eminent instrument-makers in Dublin, and assisting them in the practical and theoretical side of their work. Perhaps this story is connected with his later habit of using instruments for the picking of pockets.

Barrington's general education was not altogether neglected during his apprenticeship, for Jones had him also taught the elements of arithmetic, geography, and English grammar. But a better prospect suddenly opened out for him. The young boy attracted the attention of the Rev. Dr. Westropp, of Leixlipp in Co. Dublin, a dignitary of the Irish Church, equally well known for his wealth, benevolence, and learning. Dr. Westropp took such a fancy to Barrington that he determined to send him to Trinity College; and as a preparation for this, he placed him, in January 1771, at a free grammar school in Dublin. This event was the first of the many pieces of good fortune which Barrington enjoyed as a result of his attractive manner, which won him friends and patrons at all kinds of odd moments throughout his life. But this time his good fortune was of very brief duration. After he had been at the school less than six months he unluckily fell into a dispute with a boy much older and stronger than himself; the dispute degenerated into a fight, of which Barrington had considerably the worse, and in a fit of fury he stabbed his antagonist with a penknife. The latter was not dangerously wounded, but Barrington received a severe flogging for his assault. His 'unrelenting and vindictive tem-

per' was so irritated by this treatment that he made up his mind at once to run away from his school, family, and friends. In making his escape he committed his first theft, taking with him 12 guineas which belonged to his schoolmaster and a gold repeating-watch which belonged to his master's sister.

Equipped only with a few shirts and two or three pairs of stockings, Barrington crept quietly out of the school-house in the middle of a still May night, and left Dublin along the great northern road.[9] He walked on throughout the following day without halt, rest, or food; and late in the evening reached Drogheda, where his mother had once lived. He there entered an obscure inn, which served as a lodging for a company of strolling stage-players working under the management of one John Price. Price was a typical figure of his age, born of a good family at Poole in Dorsetshire, moderately well educated, and attractive in appearance, manners, and conversation. He had served as an attorney's clerk in London, and had picked up an expert knowledge of the seamy side of life, including all the arts of fraudulent moneymaking. He had been caught thieving and sentenced at the Old Bailey to transportation, which had been commuted—as often happened—to exile from the country. So he had come to Ireland, to make a living by his wits until his sentence expired. Price was just the kind of person to make an impression on the runaway schoolboy, who badly wanted a confidant and adviser. He poured out his story, was heard with sympathy, and

was offered at once a place in the company. At Price's suggestion, he dropped the name of Waldron and adopted that of Barrington, by which he was always afterwards known. He then joined the players, found that he had a natural gift for the stage, and within four days was playing his first part, unprompted, as 'Jaffier' in Otway's *Venice Preserved*, before a crowded audience in a barn in the suburbs of Drogheda. Barrington had 'a speaking eye, and expressive countenance, a tolerable theatrical figure, a very pompous enunciation, and a most retentive memory'. His colleagues flattered him that he would one day cut a fine figure on the stage in London or Dublin. At the moment, however, Dublin was the last place he wished to be seen in, and Drogheda was too near to Dublin for his comfort. Word of his stage-acting might be carried home and lead to his pursuit and recall to the hated school. So the whole company resolved to move on northwards to a distance of at least 60 miles from Dublin. The lack of funds necessary for the transport of their baggage and properties was supplied by Barrington, who pawned the gold watch he had carried off from the school, and contributed the proceeds to the common purse. Barrington was now the most popular member of the company, so long as his money lasted. But one of the actresses, a Miss Egerton, who had played the part of 'Belvidera' to his 'Jaffier' at Drogheda, took a particular fancy to him. Her story was more tragic than Barrington's. She was the daughter of a well-to-do tradesman of Coventry, and

had been persuaded by a lieutenant of marines to elope from her father's house and run off with him to Dublin. After seducing her, the lieutenant had cast her off and left her at the age of 16, 'a prey to infamy, poverty, disease, and desperation', with no resource but the stage and prostitution. Miss Egerton had been but a short while a member of Price's company when she met Barrington; they became genuinely attached to each other and contracted a liaison which lasted till the girl's death a year later. She is described as 'young and beautiful, sweet-tempered and accomplished', and a poem survives, written by Barrington in 1772, in which he addresses her in lines not a little reminiscent of Macheath's song to Polly in *The Beggar's Opera:*

> Place me where endless winter reigns,
> Where genial gales ne'er bless the plains;
> Beneath those cold inclement skies,
> Where morbid vapours ever rise:
> Place me beneath the burning zone
> Where nothing human e'er was known;
> Still Egerton's enchanting tongue,
> Her looks and smiles, shall be my song.
>
> Whether o'er burning sands I go,
> Or mountains top't with trackless snow,
> Or where the fam'd Pactolus strays,
> And all its fabled wealth displays;
> Still she alone my thoughts engage,
> And ever shall from age to age.[10]

Londonderry was the next town where Price's company chose to perform. But by the time they arrived there, they were once more as penniless as they had been at Drogheda. Price now for the first

time suggested to Barrington that the latter might try his hand at picking a pocket. A fair was being held, and Barrington's good manners and appearance would enable him to move about among the merchants and chapmen attending it, without arousing suspicion. Barrington agreed to try his hand, and Price acted as his confederate. The results were most satisfactory; in a single day they acquired by these dishonest means about 40 guineas in cash and over £150 in Irish bank-notes. They took the precaution not to change the notes in Londonderry, which might easily have led to their detection; but after two or three nights' perfunctory playing, the whole company moved on again to Ballyshannon in Donegal. This they found to be 'one of the pleasantest, cheapest, most plentiful, and most polite country towns in Ireland'; it suited them so well that they stayed there the whole of the rest of that summer and autumn, and on into the winter of 1771. The business of stage-playing now became more and more subordinated to the business of picking pockets. The company usually performed on Tuesdays and Saturdays; but on other days the members went thieving under the guidance of Price. They earned more at this game, with less effort, though with more risk, than they could on the stage.

Towards the close of the year Barrington caught a fever and lay dangerously ill for some months. The rest of the company, with the exception of Miss Egerton, moved on to other quarters and left him behind, Price, however, giving him a sum of money

to help him through his difficulties. Miss Egerton nursed him assiduously, till in the spring of 1772 he was restored to health and able to start off again from Ballyshannon in search of the company. But now he suffered a disaster. Barrington and Miss Egerton were travelling south together when, in crossing the Boyne, an accident occurred on the ferry; Miss Egerton fell into the river, and was drowned. This was a severe loss to him, and left him with no friend in the world but Price.[11] He proceeded to track Price to Limerick and thence to Cork, where the two joined forces a second time. The company had now been disbanded, and there was no more talk of stage-playing. It was settled between them that Barrington should assume the rôle of a young gentleman of wealth and family, travelling for amusement till his coming-of-age, while Price should act as his servant. They procured horses and set off, in the summer of 1772, for the races in South Ireland. Booty was easy to come by, as picking pockets among the gentry was still rather a novelty. Thus at the end of the season the two thieves found themselves able to retire to Cork for the winter with a sum of nearly £1,000 to their credit. Barrington now determined to go a stage further and set up regularly as a 'gentleman pickpocket', assuming all the airs of a man of fashion, and finding his opportunities at gaming-houses and drinking-dens, where he could pick up rich young men and rob them in the course of their dissipation and debauchery. But suddenly Price, his first

instructor, was caught in the very act of picking a pocket, was tried, and sentenced to transportation for seven years to America. This frightened Barrington. He decided to shift his ground once again, and therefore sold up all his movable property in Cork, and rode on horseback to Dublin.

It was only a little over a year since Barrington had run away from school, and Dublin was still a most unsafe place for him to show himself in public. He therefore spent the winter of 1772 in obscurity, only venturing out on the darkest evenings to lurk about the gaming-houses, where he occasionally picked up a few guineas or a watch. But as soon as spring and the fine weather returned, he grew impatient of this hole-and-corner existence, and made his way south to Carlow races. Here for the first time he himself was caught picking a pocket. At race meetings there are short and sharp methods of dealing with thieves of all kinds, without troubling the police or magistrates. Barrington received a severe cudgelling and was turned off the course, lucky to escape prosecution. He had now about exhausted all the possibilities that Ireland had to offer him. He was suspect in several quarters; and though he had many useful acquaintances in good society, the secret of his mishap at Carlow was sure to leak out before long, with great prejudice to his future prospects. Once more, then, he sold up all he possessed and made ready to migrate, this time to England and London. It was the summer of 1773, and he was nearly 18 years old.

By good luck or influence Barrington managed to secure a passage across the Irish Channel, from Dublin to Parkgate (Cheshire), in the official yacht of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the *Dorset*.[12] Her commander was a veteran naval captain, Sir Alexander Schomberg, who had received his appointment in 1771 from the Lord-Lieutenant himself, in the teeth of angry opposition from Lord Sandwich at the Admiralty. Embarked on the *Dorset* under his care were several young aristocrats who were, like Barrington, on their way to London. Among them was William Robert Fitzgerald, the young Marquis of Kildare, destined within a few months to succeed his father as Duke of Leinster. He was only 24 in 1773, but had already served as M.P. for Dublin and High Sheriff of Kildare. He was, however, a sleepy and good-natured youth; and though he afterwards became prominent as one of the leaders of the Irish Volunteers, nothing much more is recorded of him by history, save that he was 'a fond father, an indulgent landlord, and a kind master'—in short, a type that was likely to fall an easy prey to Barrington's wiles. There was also on the yacht a Captain W. H., who was of good descent and breeding, and of an intellectual and bookish turn of mind. Barrington was at home with him too, and rapidly gained his confidence. He represented himself as belonging to a well-known and wealthy Irish family, but driven to leave home by dislike of his stepmother. At his father's suggestion he was now crossing to England to take up the study of law in one of the Inns of

Court; not with any serious intention of following the profession—for the fortune to which he was heir made that unnecessary—but merely to divert his mind. Captain H. at once suggested that Barrington should enter his name in the Middle Temple, to which some of his own friends and relations belonged. He promised to give Barrington introductions to these friends, and to facilitate his entry into London society. By the time they reached England they had agreed to travel together to London; and when they got to London, after coaching by easy stages through Chester, Nantwich, and Coventry, it was Captain H., as the more experienced traveller of the two (he had visited London once or twice before), who took Barrington to put up with him at the Bath Coffee House, in Piccadilly. They made this their headquarters for the rest of the summer.

Barrington had brought with him a certain amount of money which still remained over from his Irish depredations; and until this was spent he lived the life of an ordinary young man of fashion, ingratiating himself with friends, and securing his place in the fashionable world by dressing well and making a great display of luxury. But he was already developing that talent for hypocrisy that served him so well in later years; for he combined with these habits of luxury an ostensible contempt for fashion, and a pretence of admiring only intellect and character. In the circle in which he moved this sort of flattery was novel and very acceptable. During these weeks, then, Barrington was investing

his savings in acquiring a kind of goodwill which was an asset indispensable to the successful exercise of his real profession. So far he had refrained from picking any pockets; but by the end of a month, so fast did his money melt away, that his cash in hand was reduced to about 20 guineas. He could afford to hold off no longer.

Picking pockets in London was, of course, a very different thing from picking them in Ireland: both the risk and the competition were infinitely greater. Still, as a means of regular livelihood, the profession, though dangerous, was not without its attractions. Among the confraternity of rogues and criminals, pickpockets formed a section not only very numerous, but also very prosperous. It was estimated that in and about London more pickpockets succeeded in making a comfortable living than in the whole of the rest of Europe.[13] The opera, the playhouses, the capital auctions, the public gardens and even the churches swarmed with them; they did not confine their attentions solely to London, but periodically—and especially when threatened by the attentions of the police—went on tour through the provinces, attending at fairs and horse-races. Moreover, it was to no common degree of picking pockets that Barrington aspired. The kind of capital which he possessed—his education, gentlemanly bearing, attractive personality, and good connexions—raised him far above the majority of his rivals. Barrington, so long as he kept his character, might move within the circle of good society where the common pick-

purse could not hope to follow him; big prizes lay close to his hand, and a few successful coups from time to time were all that were needed for his maintenance. On the other hand, appearances had to be kept up, and the life to be lived was luxurious, and expensive. It was also difficult, if not impossible, to ply the trade in isolation. In general, according to Barrington's own account, two persons were required for the business of picking a pocket; they were called in slang style the 'Knuckle' and the 'Gammon'.[14] The business of the 'Gammon' was to go on in front of the person whose pocket was to be picked and to stop him, either in a crowd, or by a pretended accident, while the 'Knuckle' actually effected the theft and, if necessary, passed on the proceeds to his partner in order to escape arrest. The 'Knuckle' was the more skilled practitioner of the two; but the presence of the 'Gammon' halved the risk of detection. It was also necessary for the pick-pocket to have recourse to a 'fence' for the disposal of the goods; and thus the society pickpocket could hardly avoid contact with a number of shady friends.

Dexterity was a matter either of the hand or of an instrument. Some pickpockets were skilful in introducing their hands, without being perceived, into the very bottom of the breeches-pocket, and taking out thence the money, watches, handkerchiefs, snuff-boxes and pocket-books which formed their principal booty. Miss West, later on Barrington's most notorious partner, particularly excelled in this form

of skill.[15] But every 'Knuckle' did not work with fingers alone; a few—amongst whom was Barrington—did their work mainly or wholly with a knife, whose use involved the maximum of dexterity. These introduced their hands up ladies' petticoats, taking hold of the pocket and making an incision with a knife or scissors, and so letting its contents out into their hands without discovery. It was a mark of finish for a pickpocket to deliver his spoil immediately to his associate, without stirring from the place, for this prevented detection. Indeed Barrington, when giving advice on self-protection to the public long afterwards, advised anyone who had been robbed to 'take no notice till you see some person near you stealing away, when you are to secure him or her—and ten to one but you fix on the right person: you must however be careful to lay hold of their hands, for fear of their conveying your property to an accomplice, who is always ready to receive the same, and set off with it '.[16]

The drawback to the use of these instruments was the difficulty of accounting for them in case of arrest. But Barrington, in such emergencies, always gave himself out to be a surgeon coming fresh from a visit to one of his patients. His early apprenticeship to Mr. Jones had equipped him with a smattering of medical knowledge sufficient to support this pretence; and it also, according to his own story, set him on the way to inventing a set of instruments of his own. In 1776 Barrington sketched out a plan for a knife with three joints, which could be extended

to any suitable length.[17] To a cutler near King's Mews, whom he employed to make the knife, Barrington explained its uses as follows: 'When I find myself in a crowd, and in pretty near contact with my object, I mean to use the first joint only, which is much easier of access to a close pocket than hand, however small. If at a little distance, the second joint will best answer the purpose. But if yet further off, it is easy to perceive that the third joint must be resorted to. Further, in case of a mischance, either or all the joints may be replaced in an instant; and who will be hardy enough to construe a common knife to be intended for the purpose in question?' The cutler charged two guineas for making the knife, but Barrington, in the course of satisfying his curiosity as to its use, picked his pocket of two guineas and a half, and thus proved an expensive customer.

Barrington was not so foolish as to spend his whole time on the exercise of his profession, which would have been to court disaster. He was bound to make himself agreeable to his rich friends, and to become a known frequenter of the places of fashionable amusement. But he also recognised the importance of not letting rust his natural talent for playing the part of a man of education and culture. 'The seasons of plundering and of dissipation were succeeded by intervals of retirement and study. In these, which sometimes lasted for several weeks, he shut himself up, and devoted himself to the study of the best writers in the English language, the only one with

which he was acquainted.'[18] The secret of Barrington's success was that, as he advanced in years, he not only improved in the practice of his scandalous profession, but also 'continued to cultivate his mind, and that with a degree of assiduity unexampled in one of his profession. He was remarkable for retaining very faithfully what he collected with great ease. One practice he ever had which was easily observed. If any thought or image presented itself to his mind, that he could use or improve, he did not suffer it to be lost; but, amidst the jollity of the tavern or in the warmth of an interesting conversation, he very diligently committed it to paper.' Barrington certainly possessed some literary gifts; he could turn an epigram neatly, or improvise a prologue to a stage piece; and he is said to have composed an 'Ode to Light' which, though irregularly constructed and not 'of an artificial texture', possessed some poetical merit.[19] But it was his excellent memory and his powers of observation that proved his chief mental assets; and these found their opportunity for expression when the time came for him to record the history of the settlement at Botany Bay.

One other advantage, as we have seen, Barrington had gained in the course of his early adventures. He could act. Once or twice, when times were difficult towards the end of his career in England, he returned temporarily to the stage—with success, we are told. A histrionic talent was particularly valuable to a man whose whole future depended on the extent to which he could deceive either his acquain-

tances or his judges. Barrington was necessarily a hypocrite—an accomplished weeper of tears, a pretender of reformation, a flatterer, and a simulator of injured innocence. All these devices were necessary, in the first place to protect his character as long as possible, in the second place to cajole his captors and avoid punishment. Once his character was lost, it became still more important for him to play a part by changing his rôle rapidly, and dressing now as a clergyman, now as a doctor, a tradesman, or a commercial traveller. Disguise made it difficult to identify him, and everywhere his deportment gave him the *prima facie* advantage of appearing sober and well-bred.

Yet this hypocrisy was redeemed by a strong sense of humour which hardly ever deserted him, and which peeps out in his speeches of defence, his casual conversations and his writings. Barrington had constructed for himself a half-humorous justification of his way of life. Thus in inducing the blackmailer James—who was afflicted from time to time with conscientious scruples—to set up in partnership with him for picking pockets, he jocularly reminded him of Captain Rolando's observations to Gil Blas, 'that all men are desirous to appropriate to themselves their neighbour's property'. 'Sovereigns seize on the territories of neighbouring princes,' he argued, 'whenever they think doing so suits their purposes, without scruple or remorse; people of fashion run in debt and never pay their creditors; bankers and brokers are seldom restrained by conscience in the interest they take, or the charges which they make;

merchants, and traders of all kinds, are not more scrupulous in the profits which they exact of their unwary customers; and as for lawyers of every denomination, their boundless rapacity is proverbial. The *mode* then of appropriating the property to oneself, and not the *act* of doing so, is the sole difference between the most noted pickpocket and the most powerful prince or the most opulent merchant.'[20] There was certainly a touch of Jacobinism, not to say Socialism, in Barrington's views about property. He was often heard to declare that 'he was a much more inoffensive character than many persons of opulence who posed as honest men, for *he* only robbed those who could afford to lose, and part of the spoil he gave occasionally to distressed objects'.[21] And once, when he was in Newgate and happened to be discussing politics, he observed that 'it had long been a complaint that there was not an equal mode of taxation; therefore, to bring things as nearly as possible to a level, he levied a tax on the rich'. Truly, it may be said Barrington went into his profession with his eyes open!

Yet he was very well aware that one or two false steps would soon alter the balance to his disadvantage. His very assets—his appearance, his character, his culture—were liable to waste and deteriorate in prison; and a conviction therefore was what he had most to fear. When cast down into the 'hulks', his body racked with illness, his hands roughened and torn with hard labour, and his person contaminated with foul associates, Barrington would fall in social

worth. To begin again after release would be harder each time. And the constant cry, both of the criminal and of the criminal-catcher of those times, was the impossibility of the convict ever finding decent employment if he chose to try and 'run straight'. According to his own claim before Chief Baron Eyre, it was unemployment that drove him back to picking pockets; no philanthropist or moralising judge had come forward with the offer of an honest job.

But in the meantime there were many ways of putting off the evil day. The fact was that a pickpocket was not easy to catch or convict at all. Barrington habitually got rid of his booty, if he was seized, either by handing it to his confederate, or by returning it to the person of his victim, or, as a last resort, by dropping it on the ground. In the latter event, as there was always a crowd at hand, the odds were against proof being forthcoming which connected him definitely with a theft. It must be remembered that Barrington was especially skilful in the most dangerous part of the operation, the withdrawal of the booty without its owner's notice. If the victim could not swear he had felt a hand, if he had not suspected Barrington until afterwards, only the finding of the lost object on Barrington's person, or the evidence of some one who had seen him disposing of it, could make conviction certain. Nowadays the pickpocket is under surveillance from the policeman and the detective; then the public had to look after its own protection.

The risk of arrest by persons other than the victim was indeed minute. At the end of the century, among a criminal or worthless population of London estimated by Colquhoun in his *Police of the Metropolis* at 115,000, there were some 2,000 professed thieves, burglars, highway-robbers, and river-pirates. To deal with these there were enrolled about 1,000 constables, for the five jurisdictions of London, Westminster, Middlesex, the Tower Liberty, and Southwark! Of these, four-fifths were unpaid servants of the parish, enrolled under compulsion; fifty were full-time stipendiary officers; thirty-two were extra constables employed by the City of London; and sixty-seven composed the road-patrols attached to Bow Street office. Even this latter force was not available when Barrington started on his career. For the actual business of inquiry, pursuit and arrest of criminals, no more than eight or nine picked men—the famous 'Bow Street Runners'—were available.[22] These notorious detectives were certainly intrepid and resolute agents of the law, known everywhere by their red waistcoats and tiny batons topped with a gilt crown. But a large part of their prestige must have been due to bluff. The pitiful inadequacy of their numbers could only be made good by their assumed or actual omniscience of the criminal underworld. Their headquarters at Bow Street had been placed, designedly, in the quarter round Covent Garden, which swarmed with thieves and prostitutes. But within this area alone, bounded by St. Mary-le-Strand, St. Martin's, St. Clement's, Char-

ing Cross, and Hedge Lane, there existed some eighty taverns, all of which were centres for the hatching of schemes of robbery and violence, and for the disposal of the booty yielded by such crimes.[23] The Bow Street Runners made themselves familiar with these haunts, and took a pride in knowing the principal criminals personally, so that they could recognise them if necessary. But to carry through their work successfully they had to resort to underhand methods, gaining their information secretly in the 'flash houses' or thieves' taverns, as they were called, from informers of the pattern of Jonathan Wild. On the other hand, their own best efforts were always given in the quarters where they were most likely to be profitable to themselves. The Bow Street Runner liked to be summoned to attend at some Royal function, where he would be well rewarded by gratuities; one or two of the most celebrated—such as Townsend—retired with a fortune of ten or twenty thousand pounds, not all saved, one may guess, from the regular fees of £1 a day which were allowed to them when on special service.

For crime had its financial side for the police as well as for the criminal. A series of cash rewards, varying in amount from £60 for a burglar or housebreaker to £10 for a counterfeiter, cattle or sheep-stealer, was offered to any person 'apprehending and prosecuting to conviction' certain classes of malefactors.[24] Picking pockets, however, was not among the eleven offences specified for reward under the

acts. Therefore it paid the constables and detectives to reserve their energies for higher and more lucrative game, unless some victim of a pickpocket was so infuriated by his loss as to offer them a special reward of his own. Barrington, in short, had chosen a profession for whose suppression no particular incentive was offered by law to the police.

On the other hand, the offence itself was regarded by the law as grave, and what was lacking in the machinery for the detection of offenders was compensated for by the heaviness of their punishment, if convicted. Grand Larceny, defined as 'the taking and carrying away the mere personal property or goods of another above the value of twelve pence', was a capital offence, punishable with death and forfeiture of property. Petty Larceny, where the goods taken in the above manner were valued at less than twelve pence, was punishable by imprisonment, whipping, or transportation, with forfeiture of goods and chattels. The death penalty, however, was in practice reserved for stealing 'privately from the person', an offence which could hardly be brought home to the pickpocket unless he was caught in the act. Grand Larceny 'not otherwise distinguished', or in other words stealing, but not privately from the person, ranked as Petty Larceny.[25] It was, as Colquhoun observed, 'repugnant to reason, policy or justice' that stealing the least trifle above twelve pence should subject the offender to death; and juries—and sometimes even prosecutors and witnesses—were apt to think so too. This predisposed

them to a rigorous examination of the evidence, requiring the plainest proof that the pickpocket was actually seen or felt to take the goods from the person of his victim. Now Barrington was an adept at this part of his profession, and when taken, it was usually at a later stage, when he was trying to make off with the goods. But his habit of dropping the stolen object on to the ground served to confuse the evidence; the prosecutor might have dropped his watch himself, or some third person stolen it from him; who could tell for sure, in a crowd? Even if the theft itself were proved, there still remained some chance of mitigation of sentence through the valuation of the stolen object. Tender-hearted prosecutors sometimes reduced their charge to petty larceny by valuing their losses at under twelve pence. In all these ways the actual severity of the law helped the pickpocket. It is not surprising to find that in a typical year (1790–1) at the Old Bailey 1,533 prosecutions, which included 642 for grand larceny, led to only 551 convictions and sentences, and to 711 discharges.

Barrington had one other resource to fall back on in time of trouble—his ready tongue. He soon became celebrated, not only for the frequency of his appearances in court, but still more for the ingenious speeches which he made in his own defence. At this time prisoners accused of a felony were not allowed to employ counsel except to cross-examine the witnesses for the prosecution. This apparent disability was really an advantage to persons of address like Barrington. He developed a stock line of appeal,

which was calculated to make juries believe they had to deal with a polite gentleman who had got himself by accident into an unfortunate position. As a rule he began by the *argumentum ad misericordiam*; the daily newspapers had prejudiced his case by their lying slanders upon his personal reputation. Having flattered the jury with the assumption that they would be above taking notice of this kind of thing, he would pass on to an explanation of how he came to be at the particular spot where the trouble occurred. Usually this brought a reference to his practice as a surgeon; he had escaped from his professional duties to snatch a little hard-earned recreation at the Opera or Drury Lane, or the Pantheon, or to improve his mind by hearing a charity-sermon in church. Barrington would then proceed to discount the evidence of his prosecutors; if they were constables, they were acting from malice; if private persons, they were confused and unreliable persons who had proved themselves incapable of detecting their losses on the spot. If the stolen goods had fallen to the ground—or better, been *thrown* to the ground a few yards away—a new element of uncertainty was introduced. Then Barrington would round off his speech with some unexceptionable general observations on the purity of British justice, and hope for the best. The number of his acquittals is the best tribute to his powers of oratory.

Upon magistrates and officials less susceptible to sentiment and with longer memories, Barrington had other tricks to play. He produced stories of rich

relations and a home in Ireland; he produced promises of reformation and pleas for one more chance. All these tricks, it is to be remembered, were fresher then than they are now. The humane and conscientious magistrate was a new feature in London. And it must not be forgotten that Barrington not merely *looked* the sort of person who would reform if treated leniently; he *did* reform in the end. All these circumstances must be taken into account in considering the long run of liberty he enjoyed, and the fact that not more than seven and a half of the long seventeen years of his professional career as a pickpocket were spent in prison.[26]

CHAPTER II

THE MASTER PICKPOCKET (1773–1777)

Ranelagh was the scene of Barrington's first exploit in London. These celebrated pleasure-gardens formed part of the grounds of Chelsea Hospital, and had been open as a place of public resort since 1742. They comprised an immense hall called 'The Rotunda', with a promenade surrounded by tiers of boxes, and a garden with innumerable walks and retreats, a miniature lake and a Chinese pagoda. The public were admitted at a price of from one to three shillings, and in the 'seventies Ranelagh had become fashionable among royalty, the aristocracy, and distinguished foreigners visiting London. Besides concerts, masquerades, dances, and displays of fireworks, there were facilities for gaming and drinking. Many persons went there to drink tea and coffee, gossip, and show off their clothes; others simply to stare at the crowd. The more serious amusements, such as music, finished at ten or ten-thirty in the evening: but it was the fashion in the highest circles not to arrive until after this hour, and then to lounge about on the floor of 'The Rotunda' till midnight. Naturally, the morals of Ranelagh were none of the best; and this made it the ideal

spot for Barrington's *début*, as its reputation precluded any narrowing of the range of search for property which might be missed by any party of which he was a member.

Barrington was taken to Ranelagh by his new-found friends of the *Dorset* yacht.[1] It was not on their pockets, however, that he operated this first night. More obvious prey turned up when he saw the young Duke of Leinster engaged deeply in conversation with an elderly half-pay colonel on the Irish establishment, Sir William Draper, who had lately distinguished himself by entering into a public newspaper controversy with the formidable 'Junius' to defend the Marquis of Granby against certain supposed aspersions on his character. Draper had received his K.B. in 1766, and was a man of wealth who carried money about on his person. They had two ladies with them. Barrington had met the Duke on the *Dorset* a month before, but after their embarkation, his own and the Duke's party had come different ways to London. So he contented himself with making but a slight bow of recognition to the Duke, and then some minutes later approached the Duke's party without suspicion and placed himself where he could pick their pockets conveniently. He relieved the Duke of over £80, Sir William Draper of 35 guineas, and one of the ladies of her watch; and then returned safely to his own friends, who had hardly noticed his absence.

His action, however, had been observed by a man named James, who had also been a passenger with

him on the *Dorset* yacht. James was an adventurer in the same profession, and his history was not unlike Barrington's. He came of a good family in Norfolk, where his father possessed an estate worth £300 a year. As a boy he had been patronised by a nobleman who lived in the neighbourhood, and by him sent on a tour of the Continent to keep his son company. But upon the death of his son, James had been cast off by his patron, and, his father's affairs being embarrassed, had come up to London to make his fortune. Here he took to gaming, was reduced to beggary, and turned highwayman. After failing to make a living thus, and being wounded in an encounter at Egham, he reformed, and passed through a whole range of occupations in the effort to earn his bread honestly. He had been tutor, schoolmaster, journalist, translator, interpreter, clerk, waiter, and hotel-porter by turns. But in every case he found it impossible to keep his employment. At last he was reduced to destitution, rambling about by day in the brickfields of the suburbs, and by night sleeping under a hedge or in the warm ashes of a glasshouse in a market-garden. In this desperate state he was relieved by a cardsharper, and taken by him into partnership in picking pockets. Dressing sometimes as a parson, sometimes as an officer, he maintained himself for several months by thieving, till he was caught picking the pocket of the Secretary to the French Legation. Thereupon, after bribing the constable who arrested him to let him escape, he fled to Ireland—evidently the usual refuge

of criminals for whom England was too hot—and stayed there till he heard that the Frenchman had gone back to France. He had then returned to London at the same time as Barrington, in order to make a fresh start.

James was a blackmailer. He threatened to expose Barrington, unless he consented to give him a share of the spoils taken from the Duke and Sir William Draper. Barrington had no alternative but to give way. He found an excuse to leave his friends, and accompanied James to a private room at the Golden Cross Hotel at Charing Cross, a famous eighteenth-century rendezvous for travellers. Here they came to an agreement, James taking the watch and a £10 note, and Barrington the rest of the money. Barrington now concluded that James might turn out a useful ally, knowing the town better than he did, and able to dispose of any valuables that he might acquire. Therefore he proposed that they should enter into partnership with one another, upon the following terms. They were to pool whatever they might either of them acquire, and to divide the pool equally; valuable objects, such as watches or jewellery, not being sold except when both of them could be present. Elaborate precautions were to be taken to prevent any suspicion of collusion. The partners were not to be seen about in public together, and as a further safeguard James was to secure his disguise by resuming his clergyman's habit. Twice every week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, they were to meet to settle accounts; but never, if it

could possibly be avoided, more than once at the same house. On these terms agreement was reached between the two thieves; and Barrington gained what he stood most in need of, an introduction to a 'fence' for the disposal of any goods he might steal, without risk to himself. Within a few days he had recourse to his partner's good offices: for he succeeded, at a supper-party held at the Thatched House Tavern in the Strand, in robbing his young *Dorset* friends of their watches and other trinkets when they were too drunk to suspect what was happening to them. Heavy drinking was, of course, a fashion of the period—a fashion to which Barrington must have owed many of his successes, for some of his most daring *coups* could hardly have been brought off, even with *his* legerdemain, upon sober subjects. The character of these drinking-bouts can best be realised from the fact that for more than two years Barrington remained unsuspected of theft by his acquaintances, who continued to regard him as a man of good character and to introduce him to their friends.

From the time of his *début* in London in the summer of 1773 to the commencement of a daring series of escapades that brought him notoriety in 1775, Barrington's career is obscure. He may not have remained in London all this time; for one account of his career locates him again in Dublin at the beginning of 1774, where he was arrested for picking the pocket, in company of a woman named Ranby, of an Irish Peer during a performance at

Rider's Theatre. He is said to have been liberated after a short confinement, because the Peer whom he had robbed recollected Captain Barrington and desired to avoid a scandal. According further to this account, Barrington, after this escape, left Dublin on a long sea-voyage in a ship bound to the West Indies, working his passage as a surgeon's mate, and returning by another ship which arrived at London at the beginning of 1775. While it is not impossible that Barrington actually pursued his reputed profession in this way for a while, it scarcely seems very probable. So much of his success depended on his keeping up his prestige and connexions in London society, that he would have been foolish to have disappeared for so long an interval, unless for a very good reason, such as risk of arrest. It seems more probable, therefore, that during 1774 Barrington was still in London, living the life of a rich young man of fashion, not yet suspected by his friends, and prospering at their expense.

In the spring and summer of 1775 he received his first two warnings of the risks of his profession.[2] He found himself twice in Bow Street police-court, once in April, once in July. On the former occasion he was charged with robbing a lady's pocket of her purse; but he gave a false name, Brown, and was discharged for want of evidence. About this time he moved his lodgings to a public-house called The Nag's Head, in Orange Court, Leicester Fields.[3] The July case was more serious; he was arrested for stealing the watch of an officer, Captain Sunderland,

and committed for trial. But he was saved by the outbreak of war with the American colonies. His prosecutor was ordered to America with his regiment; and so the case against Barrington was dropped, and he was released. As there had been no trial, there was no publicity, and his reputation escaped for the time being. Perhaps, though, he thought it wise to lie low for a while; for almost immediately afterwards we find Barrington leaving London and spending the rest of the summer visiting those seaside resorts which, in the last quarter of the century, were just beginning to organise their attractions to visitors.[4] Brighton was then 'frequented by a very genteel company': its population had not begun to grow by leaps and bounds, as it was soon to do under the favour of the Prince Regent. It was still an unspoiled fishing-village, resorted to by a few noblemen only, who found it convenient for taking a quiet holiday not too far from London. Barrington ingratiated himself here into a circle of friends of whom any man might be proud.[5] There was Robert, 4th Duke of Ancaster, then a boy of 19. There was Washington Shirley, 5th Earl Ferrers, son of the Earl who had been hanged for murdering his steward; he had recovered his father's lands in 1771, and was now Vice-Admiral of the Blue. Then there was Thomas, 2nd Lord Lyttleton, 'the wicked Lord Lyttleton', who, as Wraxall says, 'by the profligacy of his conduct, and the abuse of his talents, seemed to emulate Dryden's Duke of Buckingham or Pope's Duke of

Wharton, both of whom he resembled in the superiority of his natural endowments, as well as in the peculiarity of his end'.[6] He had recently made a reputation in the House of Lords at the age of 32 by a maiden speech on the subject of copyright, and was to become a Privy Councillor before the year was out. There was also Sir Alexander Leith, a young Captain of Dragoons only 17 years old, destined to be the father of a famous writer on architecture. At this time he was living in Sussex, and took Lord Lyttleton and Barrington with him on an excursion to Chichester, to see the Cathedral. Here, though opportunities presented themselves, Barrington refrained from exercising his profession within the Cathedral precincts; instead, he let fall one of those *bons mots* by which he was afterwards remembered. While the party was being shown round the Cathedral, the family vault of the Dukes of Richmond, recently erected, was pointed out as one of the sights of the place. It was inscribed with the words 'Domus Ultima', i.e. 'The Last House'. On this Barrington produced the following epigram: [7]

> Did he, who thus inscrib'd this wall,
> Not *read*, or not *believe*, St. Paul?
> Who says, 'There is, where'er it stands,
> *Another* house, not made with hands.'
> Or shall we gather, from these words,
> That *house* is not a *House* of Lords? [7]

This is certainly an improvement on the verses to Miss Egerton, and shows evidence of that whimsical

humour which not even Botany Bay, years after, could extinguish.

In the autumn Barrington was back again in London, ready to get seriously to work again. He was now becoming tired of his partnership with James, whose criminal propensities were impaired by occasional relapses into remorse and plans to reform; so he began to look about for someone more adventurous. Fortune provided him with what he needed, as the result of a decidedly comical adventure. One evening Barrington visited a favourite haunt of his, Covent Garden Theatre, with a view to doing a little business. He took a seat next to a lady named Elizabeth West, who was—though he did not know it—one of the most skilful and successful pickpockets in London! [8] Miss West, finding herself sitting alongside of a refined and wealthy-looking young man, concluded that he might be worth robbing, and quietly abstracted the contents of his pocket without his notice. When she came to examine her spoil, however, she found wrapped up in his handkerchief a number of queer-looking instruments which she recognised as the tools of her own trade. Barrington had but recently commissioned the cutler of King's Mews to make him a three-jointed knife; and he also employed three other instruments, a key with a hook, a long whalebone drag, and a ring with springs.

When Miss West felt certain of her neighbour's profession, she took him aside out of the theatre and gave him 'a Masonic hint', by which Barrington

realised he had to deal with one of his own confraternity. The strange circumstances under which they had met drew them together; and Miss West offered to give Barrington lessons in stealing, in order to complete his education in this field.[9] From this it was but a natural step to their setting up in partnership together; as Miss West was the more skilful of the two, she usually took the actual work of robbery upon herself, while Barrington stood by and acted as confederate and receiver. This arrangement worked admirably, and Barrington found himself in prosperity's way. As before, the partners were careful not to be seen hunting together too often. Whenever possible, they varied their joint expeditions by pursuing separate courses on different fields of action. Thus Barrington, in his character of gentleman-at-leisure, bought a horse and rode upon it in style to visit the races, fairs, and other similar places of amusement round the outskirts of London; while Miss West frequented Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Haymarket theatres, and visited such pleasure-resorts as the Pantheon, 'at which places her salary', we are assured, 'was full as much as that allowed by the Public in other places to her partner'.[10] When they found it necessary to join their forces, Barrington attended her disguised as her footman. In general, however, he lived a quiet and outwardly-respectable life. He made a point of always paying his tradesmen punctually; and as a rule he did not keep late hours at night. Indeed, it was his habit to come home to his lodging by ten

o'clock, and not to gossip in his landlord's taproom, but to mount early to bed, ordering a pint of beer to be brought up after him to his room.[11] No one could suspect that this quiet young gentleman had no means of support other than his partnership with the notorious Miss West. However, at the very outset of their association they very nearly received a fatal set-back. They went together to the Pantheon, which Horace Walpole has described as 'a Winter Ranelagh', erected in Oxford Street (not very far from the present Oxford Circus Tube Station) in 1772 at a cost of £60,000. There they set upon a Mr. Day, and robbed him of his watch. Both were caught on this occasion, but secured acquittal, as the evidence was inconclusive.

As well as a woman partner, however, Barrington needed a male colleague, to help him on those enterprises which a woman could not share. He now finally parted from James, who abandoned his career of crime for good and retired to the Continent, where he entered a Roman Catholic monastery in Westphalia and spent the rest of his days in repentance and piety. In his place Barrington associated himself with an adventurer named Lowe, who had originally been a flunkey, but had later turned publican and had accumulated in this capacity a small capital.[12] By lending this capital at usury, he made a fortune large enough to enable him to take a house in Bloomsbury and assume the character of a gentleman. He combined secret money-lending with ostentatious generosity,

and soon acquired a reputation for benevolence by subscribing to most of the public charities in and about town. But Lowe was destined to come to a bad end. Through his donations he succeeded in having himself appointed treasurer of a new Hospital for the Blind then being opened in Kentish Town. His object was to embezzle its funds, of which he is said to have appropriated over £5,000. At last, in 1779, he was suspected of the atrocious crime of setting fire to the hospital in order to cover up his thefts. Lowe was away in Liverpool on business at the time when the fire actually broke out, but it was proved that combustibles had been introduced into the building through a window before his departure, and that neither fire nor candle had been used in the hospital that night. On being questioned he returned such equivocal answers that the magistrate had him arrested; while lying in gaol at Liverpool he took poison and died, thus confirming the suspicions which had been formed.

Lowe was clearly a man ready for any villainy, and under his influence Barrington 'seemed to increase in temerity and desperation'. Two escapades, the most notorious and amazing in his whole career, followed in quick succession. In the autumn of 1775 the London magazines were full of Russian news, especially Pugachev's peasant rebellion against Catherine II. And so fashionable society was all agog to see the well-known favourite of the Empress, Count Gregory Orloff, who was making a tour through Europe and visiting London on his

way. Count Orloff, after enjoying ten years of Catherine's favour, had fallen into disgrace in 1772; and though he had enjoyed a brief restoration two years later, he was by 1775 definitely superseded by a new favourite, and was solacing himself with gambling and drinking on his travels. Orloff was remarkable alike for his good looks, his coarseness, and his extravagance, which was shown not only by his reckless, high stakes at play, but by his careless display of jewellery and other valuables in public places. At this time he was flaunting 'an elegant and valuable gold snuff-box set with brilliants', which had been given to him by the Empress and was said to be worth no less than £40,000. Now Barrington conceived the idea of robbing Count Orloff of his snuff-box—a *coup* which, if he had been able to bring it off, would have made him wealthy and secure for the rest of his life.

Unfortunately for him, his character was not good enough to enable him to gain a direct introduction to the Count personally. He therefore determined to choose an opportunity when the Count was visiting some public place, where he might get near enough to him in a crowd to pick his pocket. On Friday night, October 26, 1775, Orloff paid a visit to Covent Garden Theatre; and as he was leaving the theatre Barrington approached him and contrived to remove the snuff-box from his waistcoat pocket and transfer it to his own. But Orloff felt his loss in time, and at once seized Barrington by the collar, while his interpreter (for the Prince could

speak no English) called out that His Excellency's pocket had been picked. Barrington resisted, and a scuffle followed, in the course of which he, 'in as secret a manner as possible, slid the box into the owner's hand' again. Two constables, Ezekiel Miller and John Corker, then took him into custody, where he was kept several days, and eventually brought him up at Bow Street before Sir John Fielding on November 1. The blind magistrate interrogated him not only on the facts of the case, but also on his own antecedents; to which Barrington replied that he was of Irish birth, by profession a surgeon, and but recently come to practise in London. The constables gave evidence as to arrest; but Count Orloff did not come forward to prosecute. His ignorance of English and English courts, and the fact that he had recovered his diamonds, may have had something to do with this decision. For his part Barrington 'throughout the whole examination seemed greatly distressed and sensible of the disagreeable predicament he stood in'; we are told he wept incessantly during the proceedings.[13] His landlord appeared and gave evidence as to character, saying that Barrington had lodged with him five months and was in every way a quiet and respectable lodger. All this, combined with his own 'genteel' appearance, was enough to induce the magistrate to give him the benefit of the doubt. Sir John Fielding admonished him upon 'the illicit and dangerous practice of picking pockets',[14] pointed out 'the hair-breadth scape he had got over', and

discharged him, hoping 'he would make a proper use of his liberty'. On his discharge 'he burst out into a flood of tears, made a low obeisance to the Bench, and declared he was not the person who committed the act'. *Lloyd's Evening Post* described him at the trial as 'about twenty years of age, of a fashionable appearance': while the *Morning Post* commented on the whole affair that 'if external attestations, and a most pleading and affecting sense of his unfortunate situation, may be allowed to govern our opinion, we may with reason conclude that this young fellow has been made a tool of some experienced villain who, after committing the felony, transferred his custody'.[15]

The *Morning Chronicle*, and the other newspapers above-mentioned, suppressed Barrington's name in their accounts of the Orloff case; but it was not possible for him to escape the ill-effects of rumour and gossip. Previously, we are told, 'he had enjoyed the regard of some few, who admired his talents and enjoyed his conversation; but this circumstance becoming public, he had the mortification to find himself wholly deserted. His person was avoided like infection.'[16] Possibly this statement was an exaggeration; for the next episode in Barrington's career suggests that he had not yet become a marked man, and was not wholly shut out from good society. 'There were' we are told 'some few who still respected his talents, however misused, and who, while they contemplated in him the sprightly wit and the agreeable companion, were contented to

forget the pickpocket, or, at least, were inclined to believe him innocent.' Nevertheless, we do not hear any more, after this time, of his aristocratic friends; to that extent he had suffered from the failure of his reckless gamble with chance. But having missed the big prize, Barrington threw himself into a second enterprise which promised to be very profitable and even more risky. The newspapers at the end of June, 1775, had given publicity to the fact that Lord Stormont had accidentally dropped and lost in the drawing-room at St. James's Palace his badge of the Order of the Thistle, a golden eight-pointed star with an enamelled figure of St. Andrew bearing in front of him his cross of silver, suspended by a ribbon from the collar of golden thistles twined with sprigs of rue. 'According to one account' said the *Scots Magazine* 'it was cut off by some sharper, who made off with it undiscovered.' [17] Did Barrington read of this accident, and did it put into his head the ambition to cause its repetition? However this may be, he concerted with Lowe a plan remarkably resembling that of the unknown 'sharper' in June. Barrington was to disguise himself as a clergyman, and to try to gain access to the Royal Levee held at St. James's on the occasion of the Queen's birthday in January. Here he was not merely to pick pockets, but—what was much more daring—to try to cut some of the diamonds off the Orders worn by Knights of the Garter, Bath, and Thistle, who on such an occasion were sure to be wearing the insignia of their Orders on the outside of their coats.

We do not know exactly what part Lowe played in the enterprise; perhaps, through his charitable connexions, he was able to procure for Barrington the necessary card of invitation to attend the ceremony. The Court of January 19, 1776, was, according to the papers, 'very brilliant and numerous; the ladies were dressed in very rich silks of English manufacture'.[18] Those present included several of the principal English officers who held high command during the American War, such as General Gage and General Burgoyne, the Speaker Sir Fletcher Norton, the Lord Chancellor Lord Mansfield, the Dukes of Chandos and Argyle, the Earl of Dartmouth, and David Garrick and his wife. Severe wintry weather prevailed at the time, and many of the nobility were kept snowbound at their country residences. But in spite of this the drawing-room itself and the subsequent ball were crowded with guests; an unusual feature of the gathering was that the ladies wore artificial flowers in their head-dress instead of the usual birds' feathers—as the *Morning Post* declared, 'the decoration was like a *fête champêtre*'. Most extraordinary of all was Lady Gideon, who made the Queen smile, by appearing with the lower part of her hair dressed like a man's wig, while the upper part terminated in a lofty peak like a grenadier's cap, with a bouquet on top of all.[19]

In amongst this distinguished company came Barrington in his disguise. We can only suppose that the usual habits of the day prevailed, and that some of the distinguished noblemen who were present

took more drink than was good for them. It must also be remembered that at this time the Bow Street Runners had not yet developed their system of attendance and vigilance at the Royal ceremonies. Barrington succeeded perfectly in his enterprise; for he found means to deprive the Earl of Mexborough of his diamond Order, and to get away from the Palace without exciting suspicion. 'It is astonishing' declared the *Morning Post* 'with what dexterity the thief had performed it, as the Earl had his hand upon the ribbon the moment before, to disentangle the medallion from a gentleman's sword, which the great crowd occasioned: the gold ring which supported the medallion was cut in two, and the ribbon untouched. There were nineteen extraordinarily large brilliants of the first water, and one at the top as large as a big filbert, with a variety of smaller ones in different circles.' [20] Barrington's next task was to dispose of the diamonds without attracting attention. The booty was too valuable and too easily identifiable to be sold to any English 'fence'; accordingly recourse was had to a Dutch Jew named Lurshan, who was known to Lowe, and who regularly came over from Harlem in Holland once or twice every year for the sole purpose of buying jewels. The huge sum of nearly £800 was realised from the sale of the diamonds stolen on this occasion —a sum large enough to have enabled Barrington to live quietly for some time, without getting himself into trouble, if he had wanted. This exploit was the most profitable he ever undertook; it represents

the crown of his success in the career of picking pockets.

He did not, however, discontinue his activities. On February 22, Miss West was charged with stealing, two days previously, half a guinea belonging to one Robert Sissell: [21] but no evidence was offered by the prosecutor, and she was discharged. Several weeks later it was Barrington's turn: Miss West was with him when he was arrested on an accusation of robbing a Miss Hurst of a silver watch and £5 in money. Once more he was examined by Sir John Fielding, and this time committed to Tothill Fields Bridewell, to stand his trial. But again the evidence was faulty, for the Grand Jury did not find a bill against him.[22]

He was now appearing too often in the courts to retain any shreds of good character, as an unpleasant episode showed him. His usual hunting-ground in London was the Theatre: but occasionally he varied this by hanging about in the lobbies of the Houses of Parliament, where valuable pockets were common. One day he was attending in the lobby of the House of Lords when an interesting appeal was expected to be heard: there he was recognised by a Mr. Gordon who knew him by sight and by the reputation of the Orloff episode. A warning was conveyed to Mr. Quarme, the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, and Barrington was ignominiously turned out of the lobby. He was so foolish as to take this as a personal insult, and to defend his character by writing to the papers and threatening his de-

nouncer with revenge—an exceptional course for him to take, for it is one of the notable features of his career that he never, so far as the records go, resorted to personal violence of any kind in connexion with his thefts. However, the result of this foolish threat was, that Barrington found himself once more before the magistrates on a charge of uttering threats, which led to his being bound over to keep the peace. For some time he could find no friend to go surety for him, and therefore had to suffer confinement in Tothill Fields Bridewell, where he remained till October, 1776. During this time the whole of his story was industriously circulated over London, probably with exaggerations; so that, when he came out of prison, his character was completely blasted. 'The entry to all decent society was absolutely shut against him, and he was set down as a professed impostor, and a common pickpocket.' [23]

Hardly was he at liberty, before his partner Miss West found herself again in trouble. She was indicted at the Old Bailey on October 16 for stealing, on October 11, four cornelian stones valued at five shillings, a guinea and a half, and five shillings in money from a sealmaker named John Wilson.[24] Evidently Miss West had a partiality for cornelians, for this class of stone figured in her later and fatal trial in the next year. For the moment, however, she was lucky. She had been arrested by a constable named Henry Smallwood when she was loitering on the stairs of the two-shilling gallery at

Covent Garden Theatre between 5 and 6 p.m. on October 11. The constable searched her person and found on her a sum of money and a cornelian stone. Justice Addington, before whom she was then taken, sent Smallwood back into the theatre to inquire whether anyone had had his pocket picked that evening. Thereupon Wilson came forward and declared that, while on his way up to the gallery, he had found his pocket turned inside out and its contents missing. When the trial came on, before Baron Eyre, Wilson deposed that on application to the box-office attendant, the latter had returned to him a half-guinea which had been picked up off the floor. The remainder of his property he swore to be that found in Miss West's possession at her arrest. The case then turned upon the identity of the cornelian stone. Wilson called evidence to show that he had had this particular stone recently cut for him. Miss West declared that she had had the stone in her pocket for three months, and that she had picked it up among a number of other stones which had been scattered on the ground and were being retrieved by a crowd. Elements of doubt were introduced into the case by the non-appearance in court of the man who had picked up Wilson's half-guinea, and by the fact that Wilson was doubtful whether he had seen West at all on the theatre stairs. The prisoner therefore received the benefit of the doubt, and was acquitted by the Jury.

But in spite of these escapes, the partners had nearly reached the end of their tether; and Bar-

rington was the first against whom the luck turned. At this period he was changing his lodging pretty frequently; at one time he lived with a Mr. Deadcraft, near the Golden Cross Inn: later he moved to the house of a peruke-maker named Finch in Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane.[25] At both places he bore the character of a most desirable lodger. He usually went out on 'business' about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, presumably to visit some 'fence' or to concert schemes of plunder with his accomplices. But he was still as careful as ever not to keep late nights—he always turned in before midnight—or to be seen in riotous or disreputable company. In short, he was still pursuing his profession with a careful zeal which would have been highly praiseworthy in any more honest sphere.

On December 18, 1776, the King and Queen attended a performance at Drury Lane Playhouse, and in consequence an immense crowd tried to get into the theatre: the seats and gangways were blocked, and conditions highly suitable for pickpockets prevailed. A widow named Anne Dudman, of disreputable character, who was trying to secure a seat in the pit, complained to her neighbour that she was being jostled by a good-looking young gentleman behind her, who, on being rebuked for his behaviour, said apologetically that 'civility was not to be expected at that place!' This young man was Barrington. A few minutes later the woman cried out again that Barrington had put his hand in her pocket and stolen her purse, containing a pair of

cheap silver studs, a half-guinea and 3*s.* 6*d.* in money. She caught hold of the thief's hand, wrenched the purse from it, and then complained again to her neighbour, who was named Marshall. When Marshall charged Barrington with the theft, the latter said that he was a gentleman of fortune living in Pall Mall and that his character was being impugned by the suggestion. A constable was called, and Barrington was secured and carried off before Sir John Fielding; the latter, familiar by now with his voice, though he could not see his face, committed him to Tothill Fields Bridewell to stand his trial at the Old Bailey Sessions in January.

As was the custom with suspected pickpockets, Barrington was searched; and whatever property was found on him was taken away and publicly advertised, to give the public an opportunity of coming forward and claiming stolen objects. But on this occasion no one came forward, and after eight days his property was restored to him. Barrington now thought that his position was a fairly strong one. The prosecutor was not of good character; she might not succeed, in cross-examination, in maintaining her identification of him as the man who seized her purse. Yet the mere fact of a trial at all was highly unwelcome to Barrington; and under this apprehension he took a step which was highly unwise as a piece of bluff, little likely to succeed as an *argumentum ad misericordiam*, and in case of failure bound to prejudice the jury against him at his trial. He wrote to the prosecutor from prison a letter appeal-

ing to her to withdraw her case against him, so that the Grand Jury would not find a true bill. This letter he had conveyed to Mrs. Dudman by an intermediary who was on a visit to the prison, and who apparently buoyed up Barrington's hopes by telling him that she regretted her treatment of him, and was ready to try and keep the matter out of court. Barrington's letter read as follows:

'MADAM,—

'I am happy to embrace the opportunity which presents itself of addressing to you a few lines relative to a prosecution which you have lately commenced. I am convinced, madam, that you are possessed of humanity, therefore hope that you will feel for my unhappy situation: deplorable as it is, you have it in your power to extricate me from it without sustaining the smallest injury. The Grand Jury are to find the bills to-morrow at the Guildhall, and it depends on your evidence to have the bill found or rejected. What shall I say, or in what words shall I address you? Innocent or guilty, I have suffered severely, suffered more than you can think or suppose. My character, if not totally lost, is injured in the highest degree. My confinement, and the manner in which I have been exposed, I shall not mention, though I am certain they must have the greatest weight in an humane and feeling mind, and by such would be considered as a sufficient punishment for a guilty person. May this consideration animate your heart, and induce you

to put a stop to a prosecution which cannot be attended by any agreeable reflection. Though I have received every assurance from those who are versed in affairs of this nature, yet the thought of appearing in a court of justice, where the greatest innocence is sometimes ineffectual, compels me to address you in this manner, and to intrude upon a gentleman who, I hear, is acquainted with you, to deliver this letter, and to use his good offices, hoping they will be effectual, convinced that you are superior to interest, or being made an instrument, and with the greatest reliance upon your feeling and sensibility. I remain, with the greatest respect, your obedient humble servant,

G. BARRINGTON'

Tothill Fields Bridewell
Monday, January 6
(*Directed to Miss Dudman*)

Whether or not Barrington had any real grounds for supposing that his prosecutor could be persuaded to relent, it is certain that no document could be more calculated, when read in court, to convince its hearers of his guilt. It was cleverly phrased, but almost equivalent to a confession.

A few days later, on January 16, the trial began before Justice Ashurst. Mrs. Dudman's evidence was given, and could not be substantially shaken. She peremptorily swore that Barrington's was the hand that took her purse, and that she had already noticed him before the theft on account of his

jostling behaviour. What she said was corroborated by Marshall, who had sat two seats away from Mrs. Dudman, with Barrington between them. He declared that the woman had never wavered in attributing her loss to Barrington, while he himself had seen the latter draw back his hand across his breast at the time. The case looked serious enough when Barrington was called upon to make his defence. As this was the first of his trials to be fully reported, we may give his speech in full, as follows:

'I was in the playhouse in that part of the pit which is called the standing part; and it was so very crowded, that the doors were obliged to be screwed up, in order to push the people in. The seats were all taken; and those that were in the standing part, were endeavouring, as fast as they could, to procure seats. The crowd was so great, that they hurt each other: this lady was before me, making towards a seat. I, as every person then present, was doing the same: and she cried out, that some person had their hand in her pocket, and that she had taken her purse out of their hand. She looked round immediately, and fixed on me, at the same time that she was surrounded by many people; that it was a minute at least before she could turn round. I immediately protested my innocence, and called on the company to declare whether it was possible for such a transaction to happen without some person being privy to it, and seeing it in such a place where so many people were assembled together; and every gentleman who was present, was of the same opinion

and was unanimous in saying that they were certain I was innocent.

'Upwards of five minutes had passed in this altercation, and the noise had in some measure been subsided; but some gentlemen who had lost their property in the playhouse that night, hearing a rumour, came immediately and declared that, if there was a suspected person there, it was necessary he should give satisfaction and clear himself: that he should retire to some place and be searched. To this I assented, and was retiring at the time with several people who were there, when we were met by the constable, who told me I must go before Sir John Fielding. When we were there, I was searched, my property was taken from me, and detained for eight days: and then returned, because no person would claim a single article. If the evidence this lady has given is sufficient to convict me of the crime, it is in the power of anyone to take away the life or liberty of any person whatsoever. Such a crime as this could never happen in such a place, without some person being witness to it. The lady might have found a hand in her pocket, and her fear might make her believe the man had her purse in his hand, as she had taken it out; but the crowd was so exceedingly great, that it was impossible to turn: the people were crying out, they were so exceedingly squeezed, and I hope it will have weight with the Gentlemen of the Jury.

'I mentioned just now that it was so exceedingly crowded, that if such a transaction had happened,

it was almost impossible to fix on a person. The lady (I do not mean to reflect on her, but I am obliged to take hold of every circumstance in order to exculpate myself), the lady is blind of one eye. This, I conceive, adds to the impossibility of fixing on the identity of a person.'

Barrington's defence on this occasion, though lively, was full of inconsistencies, and not comparable in skill with his utterances at a later stage in his career. And whatever effect this particular speech produced on the Jury was soon lost, when it came to be followed by the reading of the letter he had written to Mrs. Dudman. In spite of a glowing testimonial to the excellence of Barrington's character from the peruke-maker, Henry Finch, his landlord, the Jury returned a verdict of Guilty, and the Judge proceeded to sentence him to three years' hard labour in ballast-heaving at the Woolwich 'Hulks'. His offence was not capital, as the stealing had not taken place 'privily from the person'. Even now, when his guilt had been proved, and his character finally ruined, there still remained some who were sorry to see so 'genteel' a person reduced to such straits. Thus the correspondent of the *London Chronicle*, in reporting the trial, concluded: 'Barrington, from his appearance, is badly qualified to become a pupil of Mr. Campbell's at his academy off Woolwich. He is a very genteel man, about 21, and very far from athletic: his hair dressed *à-la-mode*; clothes quite in the taste; a fine gold-headed taper cane, with suitable tassels, and elegant Artois

buckles. In short, he is the *genteelest thief* ever remembered to have been seen at the Old Bailey, and it is a *great pity* he should be condemned to so *vulgar* an employment as ballast-heaving.'[26]

Condemned nevertheless he had been; and after a short stay at Newgate, he was conveyed down the Thames with a batch of other convicts, and embarked upon the 'Hulk' *Justitia*.

CHAPTER III

'DUNCAN CAMPBELL'S ACADEMY'

At a spot about 5 miles down the Thames from London, where the river takes a bend northward from Woolwich Reach to Gallions Reach, there were to be seen at any time in the last quarter of the eighteenth century—and well on into the nineteenth—certain dilapidated old ships, moored off the south bank between Woolwich Dockyard and Woolwich Arsenal. These were small war-vessels which had been sold for scrap by the Government, and purchased by a Scotch merchant named Duncan Campbell, who traded with the West Indies, and especially Jamaica. From 1758 till the outbreak of the American War of Independence, Campbell had pursued the profitable business of contracting with the Government for the transportation of felons across the Atlantic.[1] The Government until 1775 paid him £5 a head for the removal of this human refuse, and there was a brisk demand for convict labour in Maryland and Virginia, where an unskilled man could be sold for £10, a woman for £8 or £9, while a carpenter or blacksmith might fetch from £15 to £25. On the average, Campbell transported 473 convicts a year, stowing from one to two

hundred in each of his transports. Conditions were severe on these vessels—in fact, they resembled those prevailing in the slave-trade. The voyage to America took two months, and Campbell calculated to lose 14 per cent. of his cargo during this time and during the two months' waiting which preceded embarkation. This death-rate—about twice as large for the men as for the women—was due chiefly to smallpox and gaol-fever.

Campbell's trade suffered a severe shock from the outbreak of the American War. After the revolt of Maryland and Virginia, he ceased contracting for the work: there was a remote possibility of finding a market in Georgia and Florida, but none in loyal Canada. But Government found itself in a quandary, as a result of the closing of this avenue for the export of criminals. The number of penal offences on the statute-book, and therefore the number of felons liable to transportation, were increasing: provision must be made for the disposal of something like an average of a thousand convicts a year.[2] What was to be done with them? There were of course the gaols; but, by a coincidence, the philanthropist John Howard had just completed his first tour of the country, and was sending through the press the first edition of his *State of the Prisons* (1777), which effectually disposed of the idea that these gaols could be used to accommodate more criminals. An emergency Act of Parliament in 1776 did indeed empower the J.P.'s of every county to prepare 'houses of correction' for the reception of felons sentenced to death, but whose sentence was com-

muted to transportation; such felons were to be kept at hard labour for terms of up to ten years.[3] But 'houses of correction' could no more be improvised than gaols; and this part of the Act therefore remained a dead letter. There remained the possibility of devising some temporary plan for dealing with the convicts, until a permanent solution of the problem could be found. The reformers and the philanthropists put their heads together, and sought to combine a number of rather inconsistent aims. They wanted a plan which would give security to the public, deter the criminal, and at the same time reform him 'by the effect of habitual industry'. They also wished to 'supply the place of many sanguinary and inefficient laws' by devising some system of penal labour which would enable the criminal's punishment to be varied according to the crime. Accordingly, the second part of the Act of 1776 ordered that male convicts who were liable to transportation should be kept separate and not mixed with any offenders under the degree of grand larceny; but that they should be placed on old sailing vessels made fast in rivers or harbours, and there set to hard labour. They were to 'be fed with coarse, inferior food, water and small beer' and were to be clothed at the public expense. The Bill was backed by Lord North, Burke, Sir Frederic Eden, Sir Charles Bunbury and other leading members of the House[4]; it received support from all parties; but before it was passed, some opposition was raised on the ground that the Bill's principles were 'incompatible with British Ideas of Liberty'.[5] It received

the Royal Assent on May 23, and was in operation —at least that part of it which related to the 'Hulks' —within three months.

Duncan Campbell was the person to whom the Government naturally turned for help in the carrying out of this new plan. For the sum of £38 a head per annum he undertook to receive, maintain and keep in confinement at hard labour 120 convicts for three years, all expenses included, except that of surgeons.[6] In July he was appointed by the Middlesex Justices overseer of the convicts, and was directed to provide for their reception a ship of at least 240 tons burthen. He therefore procured an old East Indiaman with the significant name of *Justitia*, of 260 tons, 'a very roomy vessel', as he described it, and received his first draft of convicts in August. Having been given no particular directions as to how the ship was to be fitted out, he was free to indulge his economical bent, and to find out by experiment what was the minimum amount of air, space, food and clothing upon which human life could be supported on board. Two tiers of wooden beds were provided as sleeping quarters, which allowed each man exactly 5 feet 10 inches of space vertically and 18 inches horizontally. When this packing proved physically impracticable, an additional 6 inches of lateral space were allowed, and the men slept on a wooden platform on each deck, upon matting nailed down to keep it in place. Many of the first batch of convicts brought their own blankets: the rest he provided each with a rug, together with a tarpaulin

sheet to every six men. The convicts wore their own clothes; or if they had none, Campbell provided a Kersey jacket, worsted stockings, cap and pair of shoes apiece, with (in theory) a clean shirt every Sunday. The food allowance was unbelievably meagre. Every mess of six men was given 5 lb. of ship's biscuit, half an ox-cheek, and 3 pints of pease-soup a day; on two days a week (called 'burgoe days') were substituted 3 pints of oatmeal-porridge, 5 lb. of bread, and 2 lb. of cheese. Each man was given 4 quarts of small beer a week to drink; and occasionally 'as an indulgence' the convicts had salt-meat on Sunday. Water from the Thames—no doubt plentifully flavoured with London sewage—was pumped up for them to drink also; it was alleged to taste brackish,[7] but after all, ships of the Navy were in the habit of filling there too. In the summer a filter-stone was used.

Campbell was of opinion that 'the provisions allowed to the convicts were fully sufficient, and better than labouring men usually had', but he was willing to hold out to those who worked on shore the additional incentive of a quart of small beer a day, over and above the regular allowance. The convicts were employed in raising sand and gravel from the bed of the river in lighters, and heaping it on shore to embank the river and make a kind of quay; they also moved soil in carts and wheelbarrows to the Plat Work at Woolwich Warren. In winter the hours of work were from 8.30 to 2 or 3 p.m.; in summer longer. But as there were never more than

6 lighters provided for 120 men, and each lighter only gave work for 10 or 12 men (and that at low water), there was necessarily a good deal of wasted time and slackness. Their work was also impeded by the fact that each man's legs were shackled with iron fetters day and night. When the men were on board the 'Hulks', they were completely idle, and after dark were locked down below in the hold, left to their own devices. On cold days Captain Stewart Erskine, another Scotsman who was Campbell's principal subordinate, doled out to the men at work drams of spirit—which also served as medicine when they had the colic, and as rewards when they behaved well.[8] The convicts were kept in order by twenty guards or overseers, each of whom was armed with a broad-sword, horse-pistol and gun. A correspondent of the *Scots Magazine* who visited Woolwich when the system was fully developed, and saw about 200 men at work, describes the scene as follows: 'Some are sent a mile below Woolwich in lighters to raise ballast and row it back to the embankment at Woolwich Warren, close to the end of the Target Walk: others are there employed in throwing it from the lighters. Some wheel it to different parts to be sifted; others wheel it from the screen, and spread it for the embankment. A party is continually busied in turning round a machine for driving piles to secure the embankment from the rapidity of the tides. Carpenters, etc., are employed in repairing the hulks, that lie hard by, for the nightly reception of these objects, who have fetters

on each leg, with a chain between, that ties variously, some round their middle, others upright to the throat. Some are chained two and two; and others, whose crimes have been enormous, with heavy fetters. Six or seven men are continually walking about among them with drawn cutlasses, to prevent their escape, and likewise to prevent idleness. So far from being permitted to speak to anyone, they hardly dare to speak to each other. But what is the most surprising is the revolution in manners! Not an oath is to be heard; and each criminal performs the task assigned to him with industry and without murmuring. It seems as if each convict was most desirous of showing his readiness to work, and his obedience to discipline, being induced thereto by one only hope, viz. that of obtaining their liberty by good behaviour, which is the only means afforded them to get their liberty before the legal expiration of the time. . . . When the overseer pleases, they are sent to the hulk for dinner . . . and when he pleases, they return. Their drink is nothing but water. All is discretionary with their keeper. They do not take it by turns to work, but turn out of the hulk into the long-boat, and go on shore to work as he pleases, without distinction. If anyone appears to keep behind, he is certain of being employed the oftener. The greatest liberty allowed them is that of being permitted to go to a neighbouring ditch within their boundaries to drink.'

For a month or two, during the late summer and

early autumn of 1776, all went well; and down to the middle of October no cases of sickness were observed among the convicts. But then trouble began. A batch of convicts newly arrived from Maidstone—country gaols were reputed to be more unhealthy than London gaols—was supposed to have brought in an infection; and on November 28 three deaths were reported. In the following January eight more convicts died, and thereafter the infection spread all over the ship and the death-rate steadily mounted. New batches of convicts were from time to time drafted into the *Justitia* to fill up the gaps in her complement.

The philanthropists and prison-reformers were, however, not far from the scene. One Sunday in October, 1776, John Howard paid the first of his many visits to the *Justitia*, hoping to find the convicts healthy and reasonably fed, and to join them in Divine Service.[9] He walked twice round the ship and looked in every man's face, and was horrified to 'see by their sickly looks there was some mismanagement'. Some of the convicts, he noticed, had no shirts, shoes, stockings or waistcoats. Their biscuit —which he conjectured to be ship's biscuit from Newfoundland—was mouldy, green on both sides, and broken or crumbled. Each mess weighed only about 4 lb. (for pursers' weights on board ship were known to be two ounces in the pound short, and their measures in proportion). The convicts had no bedding, mats or straw, and the sick lay, with the healthy, on boards. A disagreeable smell hung

about the ship. There was no provision for medical attendance or for religious services, though occasionally a Methodist preacher came on board and distributed tracts, which formed the only kind of literature allowed; the convicts were given candles to read these when they were locked down below after dark.[10] Howard saw one convict who was very ill with venereal disease; he found out that no care whatever was taken of the man.

Howard was deeply shocked by what he had seen, but recognising the new and temporary nature of the whole scheme, did not care to complain in public.[11] But he remonstrated privately with the officers, particularly on the condition of the biscuit, and as a result Campbell changed the men's diet, substituting bread made of inferior flour for the biscuit, and rice broth for pease-soup. Each mess, however, now got only $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread in place of 5 lb. of biscuit. A second visit paid by Howard on January 26, 1777, only served to convince him of the faults he had previously observed; the food was tainted, insufficient and unsuitable; and the ship was badly ventilated. Campbell, though he grumbled that this would now make convicts nearly as well fed as paupers in workhouses, was driven to increase the bread allowance to 5 lb.; this gave each man $13\frac{1}{3}$ oz. a day. A year later he reached the maximum of his generosity at 6 lb., but afterwards worked back to nearer the starvation-line at $5\frac{1}{2}$ lb. This ideal figure he declared to be better than the allowance made in the Merchant Navy.[12]

In March or April, 1777, Duncan Campbell was called upon to extend his activities, and to undertake a second contract for 130 convicts for two years.[13] The price on this occasion was reduced to £26 15*s.* 10*d.* per man per annum, or nearly one-third less than in the first contract; Campbell had done his business cheaper than had been anticipated. To house the new batch of convicts he temporarily made use of one of his own Jamaica ships; but in June he bought from the Government an old captured French frigate of 731 tons, named the *Censor*,* and fitted her out. The number of deaths on board the *Justitia* up to the end of May totalled forty-seven, and during the summer months the epidemic grew steadily worse. Howard was now out of the country, but Campbell had the benefit of advice from two distinguished and well-meaning scientists, Sir Joseph Banks and his assistant, the botanist Dr. Solander.[14] At their suggestion part of the *Censor* was reserved for a hospital—the upper end of the ship—and a number of hammocks were provided for the sick; but these proved quite unsuitable for men whose legs, even during illness, remained chained together. In spite of being aired daily, the hammocks were too hot, and men grew more sickly in them, instead of recovering. In the five months from June to October seventy-nine more convicts died; the loss of life on the *Censor*, which was the more overcrowded of the two ships, being three times as great during July and August, and twice as great during September and

* Also called the 'Tayloe' hulk.

October, as the loss on the *Justitia*. In November the mortality on the ships became equal, and thereafter the *Censor* was the healthier of the two. Dr. Solander continued his visits during the summer, and from August onwards regular voluntary medical help at last became available for the convicts, in the persons of Dr. James Irwin, the Surgeon-General to the Artillery, and Dodo Ecken, his assistant. The wretched criminals had thus been shut up in the pesthouse for almost exactly a year, before help reached them!

With the approach of winter, the problem of providing sufficient warmth for the convicts became urgent again. In October Campbell equipped the ships with straw palliasses, each 6 feet long and 4 feet wide, serving for two men, who also shared one blanket. Their beds now folded up against the sides of the vessels, leaving small spaces of 20 feet square on the *Censor* and 17 feet on the *Justitia*. Ventilation was supplied by the portholes, which were kept open at night. In January, 1778, a third batch of convicts was entrusted to Campbell's care; the new contract specified that he should take charge of 130 men for a year and a half at the same rate as before. This made the population of these two floating hells about 370 in all, the *Censor* carrying some 250, and the *Justitia* half that number. The death-rate continued high, for thirty-five more convicts died by the middle of January.

The awful condition of the 'Hulks', however, had at last become too notorious to escape investigation,

and on April 15 a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed, under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Bunbury, a close friend of Howard's, to inquire into the working of the Act of 1776. The outstanding and damning fact that was brought to their notice was that from August, 1776, to March 26, 1778, 632 prisoners had been sent to the 'Hulks', of whom 176, or over 25 per cent., were dead.[15] Campbell attributed this mortality 'chiefly to the infection brought in from the different gaols', and also to the 'disordered constitutions' of the convicts. Put into plain language by the Committee, this meant that typhus and typhoid fevers were rampant; and that the mortality was increased by the overcrowding of the convicts, by the effluvia from the sick in the 'hospital', by the general want of cleanliness, and by the badly regulated diet. An analysis of the convicts showed also another horrible fact—that the original Act of 1776 had been extended to cover classes of persons, old, infirm or youthful criminals, who ought never to have been sent to the 'Hulks' at all. At the time of inquiry there were on board eight boys of under 15 years of age, eight of between 15 and 16, eleven youths of between 16 and 17 years, and twenty of between 17 and 18 years. There were also two men over 60, and thirty-one who were infirm and unfit for hard labour; two of these latter were cripples.[16] Many of the six hundred odd persons who had been sentenced to the 'Hulks' during these twenty months had committed 'crimes far inferior to what this mode of punishment was

calculated to prevent'.[17] A certain number of the convicts, especially of those under 18, had been pardoned; for Duncan Campbell periodically interceded with the Secretary of State for individuals whom he considered deserving of reward for good behaviour. But pardons were few, and so were escapes.

One of the most striking features of the convicts' condition, which was recognised as contributing towards the excessive mortality, was the universal dejection of their spirits. The convicts had, as Campbell declared, 'a great dread of this punishment', and they fell into deep depression immediately upon their arrival on board, particularly if they came from the country rather than London. Dodo Ecken 'had known eight or ten of the convicts die merely of lowness of spirits, without any fever or other disorder upon them'.[18] Captain Erskine, who had the disciplining of the convicts, had also observed among them this dejection, which he connected with the fact that in wet weather the convicts could not work, and fell a prey to idleness. The distracted wretches certainly wished they had been transported, and on two occasions had unsuccessfully mutinied. There was no convenience on board the 'Hulks' for separate confinement, and refractory convicts were given the 'cat', or kept in heavy irons for seven or fourteen days. Dr. William Smith, who had visited many of the London gaols, declared that he 'saw none so afflicted with that dejection of spirits as three or four were on board the "Hulks"'.

The convicts complained of the stinking ox-heads they were given to eat, of the brackish water, and of the lack of vegetables. In the early days their friends had been allowed to visit them and bring extra food, but this had been stopped because the visitors introduced saws and other instruments of escape. Two-thirds of the mortality was due to typhus,[19] and there were generally ten or a dozen cases of this fever on board each ship at any given moment. The overcrowding precluded any hope of limiting the infection, or even of escaping from the range of stench from the hospital. It was alleged that the coroner was unwilling to visit the 'Hulks' often, and waited till several convicts had died before sitting on them in a batch.

The labour of the convicts all this time had not been profitable. It is true that 36,000 tons of ballast had been raised out of the Thames,[20] and several embankments, ditches and mudheaps dealt with. But the value of the ballast raised from January 20, 1777, to March, 1778, was only £2,703 12*s.* 6*d.*, and of the other operations £3,350.[21] This value belonged to the Government, but amounted to less than half of the expense incurred in maintaining the convicts. Later experience gave not much better results. It came to be recognised that convict labour at the 'Hulks' on the average would yield only three-fifths of its cost.[22] Several of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee were obviously dissatisfied with this state of affairs, and suggested alternative forms of employment for the convicts.

Thus Howard believed they might profitably be set to make coarse canvas bags, coarse cloths for soldiers, and hop-bagging. Benjamin Crook recommended the making of cordage, for which there was an unlimited demand in the Navy. This occupation involved no competition with private interests, and required 'no mental abilities or any kind of education' on the part of those it employed. Sir Charles Bunbury and Dr. Fothergill favoured stone-sawing.

It was natural that, as the terrible conditions which prevailed upon the 'Hulks' became clear to the Committee, the minds of its members should revert to the discontinued system of transportation, and should play about with the idea of finding some new far-away country to which convicts might be sent to form colonies. Thus John Roberts thought the West Coast of Africa, about 400 miles from the mouth of the Gambia River, would make a satisfactory settling-ground: until he was reminded by another witness, Richard Camplin, that in the last twenty years, out of 746 Europeans who had been sent out to Cape Coast Castle, 334 had died and 271 been discharged or deserted. Then Sir John Irvin suggested employing the convicts on the fortifications at Gibraltar; but this would have meant starting another system of 'Hulks', with the old difficulty as to accommodation. Sir Joseph Banks's plan sounded more promising. Why not transport convicts to Botany Bay, on the coast of New Holland, seven months' voyage from England? He himself had accompanied Captain Cook on his voyage of

exploration along the coast of New Holland in 1770, and had stayed some months at the Bay, which had been so named in accordance with the ample opportunities for botanical research which it had afforded him. The country was thinly populated, though its climate was mild and there were few wild animals and no beasts of prey. The proportion of arable soil to barren land was small; but it was sufficient, if account was taken of the abundance of fish, wild vegetables, water, and pasture for sheep and cattle. Timber also was plentiful. Banks recommended the dispatch of at least two to three hundred persons, furnished with a full year's supply of food and clothing, and equipped with tools for agriculture and building, corn and garden seeds, arms and ammunition, boats, nets and fishing-tackle; some of these might be purchased on the way out, at the Cape. He believed that, if the settlers formed among themselves a civil government, they would necessarily increase in numbers, and come in time to provide a market for European commodities. 'It was not to be doubted', he concluded, 'that a tract of land such as New Holland, which was larger than the whole of Europe, would furnish matter of advantageous return.' [23]

These were bold and far-seeing notions, but they went decidedly further than the Committee's terms of reference, which were to consider what was to be done in the immediate future with the 'Hulks'. The report of the Committee reached three main conclusions; the 'inconveniences' (or abuses, as we

may call them) of the 'Hulks' must be remedied; the temporary nature of the whole experiment with the 'Hulks' must be reaffirmed, and a beginning made with some practical alternative plan for handling the convicts at home; and finally the possibility of finding some new outlet for transportation overseas might be hinted at. Under the first heading the Committee recommended shortening the minimum and maximum terms of imprisonment in the 'Hulks' from three and ten to one and five years respectively. Youthful offenders under 18, accused of misdemeanour or petty larceny, ought not to be sent there at all, but should be given the option, by two or more magistrates, of enlisting in the Navy. Power should also be vested in the magistrates to remit one-sixth of any convict's sentence, 'on condition that a reputable tradesman will agree to employ the person so discharged, and to give security for his good behaviour for one year'—a not very practicable suggestion. Friendless convicts might enjoy the same privilege if they would bind themselves for one year to any labour which might be allotted to them, and would comply with whatever regulations were prescribed—a kind of 'ticket-of-leave' system. Separate accommodation 'in distinct and airy cabins or apartments' ought to be provided for sick convicts; and in order to prevent infection being introduced from outside, a separate ship should be set aside for the reception of felons on first arrival, where they could be medically examined and kept in quarantine. Ground should be set

aside on shore for a garden, where vegetables might be grown and light work provided for convicts who were sick, convalescent, infirm or worthy of special reward. There ought to be provision for a clergyman to attend on Sundays and holy days, and to bury the dead; and the 'Hulks' ought to be periodically inspected by an officer or magistrate, who would make reports on their condition.

In the next place, expression was given to the current ideas of prison reform fostered by men such as Howard, which laid stress on the advantages of solitary confinement, corporal punishment ('limited and privately inflicted'), sobriety, well-regulated labour, and instruction. All these methods of penal discipline were impracticable on the 'Hulks', where convicts were crowded together indiscriminately. Therefore, while retaining the 'Hulks' as a temporary experiment, steps ought to be taken to lay the foundations of a new permanent system, by building two penitentiaries within the Home Circuit, where the experiment of 'penal labour' might be tried out under proper conditions. The report concluded by avoiding the question of devising a new system of transportation, though 'the plan of establishing a colony of young convicts in some distant part of the globe . . . where the climate is healthy and the means of support attainable, is equally agreeable to the dictates of humanity and sound policy, and might prove in the result advantageous both to navigation and commerce'.

As soon as the Committee had completed its

labours, consideration was given to the new plan for penitentiaries. The most eminent lawyer of the day, Blackstone, and the most eminent sociologist, Eden,[24] were commissioned to draft a Bill for the creation of these institutions, where 'a discipline of work' could be imposed on the convicts. Howard in the meantime crossed to Holland to procure information on the construction and regulation of the Dutch spin- and rasp-houses, which were to serve as models for the penitentiaries. Within a few months a Bill was drafted, introduced into Parliament, and passed into law. The Act of 1779 was devoted mainly to an elaborate scheme, worked out to the smallest detail, for 'confining and employing convicts in "Houses of Hard Labour" ' (as they were now finally labelled), which were to be wholly distinct and separate from common gaols, workhouses, or hospitals. All the counties of England and Wales were to be divided up into nine districts, each of which was to have at least two of these houses; and each house was to be sufficiently large to hold three times the average number of convicts annually sentenced to transportation in that district. For the whole country this involved providing accommodation for at least 3,000 convicts a year. But it would be profitless to describe in detail the many regulations laid down in the Act for the construction, equipment, maintenance, administration, and inspection of these 'Houses of Hard Labour'; for unfortunately, the whole scheme remained a paper scheme, and never came into any sort of operation.[25] Three commissioners were

indeed appointed to choose sites for the erection of the first two houses in the Home Circuit and to supervise the houses when erected—and these supervisors were John Howard, Dr. Fothergill, and George Whately. They were to arrange for the building of one house to hold 600 male convicts, and another to hold 300 females. The houses were to have storerooms, workshops, lodgings, and a kitchen-garden: and the supervisors were to appoint a clerk, governors, chaplain, surgeon, storekeepers, task-masters, a matron, and so forth. But George Whately never seems to have played any part in the operations at all, while Howard and Dr. Fothergill disagreed on the choice of sites. After a year or two's wrangling, Howard resigned in disillusion, while Dr. Fothergill soon after died.[26] Three new supervisors were appointed in 1781, including Sir Charles Bunbury; and next year a site at Battersea Rise was at last approved, and its purchase value assessed at £6,600. But when in September the supervisors intimated that they were ready to complete the purchase, the Treasury replied that 'new measures were about to be taken with respect to felons, which made the hastening the Penitentiary Houses less necessary'. The discouraged supervisors made haste to revise their plans, and at last produced an estimate of the total sum needed to build, equip, and run the two houses. As they still asked for a grant of five annual instalments of £40,000, the Treasury remained obdurate, and the scheme came to an ignominious end. The whole of the part of the Act

of 1779 relating to 'Houses of Hard Labour' remained a dead-letter.

Temporarily, till the 'Houses of Hard Labour' were ready, had the Act said, offenders were to be kept in 'Houses of Correction', or Bridewells. But besides this, the original clauses of the Act of 1776 which related to the 'Hulks' were re-enacted, with some modifications. The 'Hulks' were to receive persons sentenced to transportation for Grand Larceny, etc., and persons sentenced to death for robbery and other felonies, whose sentences had been commuted to hard labour. Such offenders were not to be employed for private profit, in delivering ballast to masters and commanders of ships [27]—perhaps Duncan Campbell had served his own Jamaica ships in this way?—but all their ballast was to be discharged on shore. The provision as to the feeding and clothing of convicts was repealed from the Act of 1776, and fines were laid on any outsiders who supplied the convicts with 'extras'. The superintendents were explicitly authorised to punish refractory convicts with whipping, 'or other moderate punishment', but dead convicts were to be buried on shore (and therefore presumably not thrown into the river). The cost of medical attendance and burials became a public charge, to be voted annually by the House of Commons. On the other hand, the superintendents were required to keep books showing the names, records, behaviour and fates of all convicts under their care, and to send in periodical reports to the Court of King's Bench at

Westminster.* Furthermore, they were to see that chaplains were employed to read prayers and preach at the 'Hulks' every Sunday, and on Christmas Day and Good Friday. Such were the reforms in the system which were recommended as a result of this detailed inquiry, and of the labours of so many earnest reformers.

Evidently the inquiry and the Act of 1779 were productive of some improvement in conditions, for when next Howard paid a visit to the 'Hulks' on November 16, 1779,[28] a hospital ship had been provided, holding twenty patients, and a system had been established whereby all new arrivals were kept in quarantine on a vessel called the *Reception* for thirty-three days, and examined by the surgeons, before being allocated to the *Justitia* and *Censor*. The former of these ships now held 256, the latter 250 convicts—therefore the overcrowding cannot have been much relieved. But according to Howard 'the prisoners on board the *Justitia* looked healthy and well; the decks were clean. They had bedding; their provisions were good of the sort; and there were not any (as at my former visit) without shoes or stockings.' The *Censor* was cleaner below deck than the *Justitia*, but the convicts did not look so

* A further proviso that government inspectors should be appointed to visit the 'hulks', penitentiaries, and gaols of London and Middlesex, and to report to Parliament on the conduct of the officials and treatment of the prisoners, does not appear to have been generally followed up. As Colquhoun says, 'if properly executed, unspeakable benefits to the public would unquestionably result from it'. (Colquhoun, *Police of the Metropolis*, p. 326.)

healthy or contented, and a greater proportion of their number was in hospital. Their food and bedding were the same as on board the *Justitia*. In the hospital ship there were two decks, one of which was for convalescent patients, and on these were twenty-five small 'cradles' for the sick to recline on. The patients had been relieved of their irons, and 'the cleanliness and quietness of the hospital did honour to the conductor'. Howard still thought, however, that the prisoners and patients were undernourished. He found 150 prisoners at work at Woolwich Warren, clothed in brown uniform. 'Their bread allowance of 1 lb. a day was too little, especially for those who worked, though they had an extra allowance of beer.'

Howard paid two further visits to the 'Hulks', on December 27, 1782, and October 19, 1783. On the former occasion the *Censor* and *Reception* were laid up, while the *Justitia* had but 180 convicts, and the hospital ship 24. Of these, 116 were employed on shore in moving ballast and planking, and 36 were working on the lighters heaving ballast. Howard considered that the hospital ship was very clean, while the *Justitia* was not dirty. Once more the convicts' bread allowance had been slightly increased, and a diet-table had been hung up in the ship's cabin, though not where the convicts could see it. To read and reflect upon this table is to realise with painful clearness how near to starvation must have been the original diet upon which it represented an *improvement*. It may be compared

'JUSTITIA' HULK (1782)		'DEFENCE' HULK (1862)		CONVICTS ON HARD LABOUR TO-DAY (1930)	
Per Day		Per Day		Per Day	
BREAKFAST		BREAKFAST		BREAKFAST	
Barley or Rice Broth	1 pint	Bread	12 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
		Cocoa	1 oz.	Margarine	½ oz.
				Porridge	½ pint
				Tea	1 pint
DINNER		DINNER		DINNER	
Mon., Wed., Fri.		*Mon., Wed., Fri.*		Bread	4 oz.
Bullock's Head	16 oz.	Soup	1 pint	*and one of the undermentioned dinners:*	
Tues., Thurs., Sat.		Meat	5 oz.	1. Beans and Bacon	24 oz.
Cheese	5⅓ oz.	Bread	9 oz.	2. Preserved Beef	19 oz.
Beer	1⅔ pint	*Tues., Thurs., Sat., Sun.*		3. Beef, preserved, and Pickles	16 oz.
Sunday		Bread	9 oz.	4. Beef, roast or boiled	23 oz.
Beer	1⅔ pint	Meat	6 oz.	5. Beef and Treacle Pudding	27 oz.
and *either*		Potatoes	16 oz.	6. Haricot Mutton	25 oz.
Salt Pork	16 oz.	HOSPITAL DIET		7. Hot Pot	23 oz.
or		*Daily for all Meals*		8. Irish Stew	23 oz.
Beef	18⅔ oz.	Gruel	1 pint	9. Savoury Bacon Pie	24 oz.
Daily Ration of Bread in addition to the above	18⅔ oz.	Bread	9 oz.	10. Meat Pie	25 oz.

	PUNISHMENT DIET *Per Day*	
	Bread	16 oz.
	Water	
		11. Meat Pudding 25 oz. 12. Mutton, boiled 23 oz. 13. Mutton, roast 21 oz. 14. Boiled Pork and Dumplings 27 oz. 15. Shepherd's Pie 24 oz. 16. Soup, Beef 1 pint 17. Soup, Pork 1 pint 18. Stewed Steak and Treacle Pudding 27 oz. No. 14 four times a month; No. 15 three times a month; Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, and 18 twice a month; the rest once a month. Weights include gravy, where applicable, and potatoes which may be issued in whole or part separately. Add 2 oz. if potatoes are not peeled.
SUPPER *Mon., Wed., Fri., Sun.* Pease and Barley Soup 1 pint *Tues., Thurs., Sat.* Oatmeal made into 'Burgoe' ⅔ gill	SUPPER Gruel 1 pint Bread 6 oz.	SUPPER Bread 8 oz. Cocoa 1 pint Margarine ½ oz. Cheese 1 oz.

with the diet in force at the time when the 'Hulks' system was finally abandoned in 1862,[29] and also with that allowed to men prisoners undergoing hard labour to-day. (*See Tables on pp.* 94 *and* 95.)

With their inadequate rations the men suffered still from the cold, and Howard adds that 'there should be to each bed in winter an additional blanket'. At his final visit in the year following, 'the men in the *Justitia* looked well, which I doubt not was in a great measure owing to their being employed, and also refrained from spirituous and other strong liquors. Of late, but few of them have died. This shows that their situation is better with respect to health.' The *Justitia* at this time held 172 convicts, the hospital ship 22, and the *Censor* 137, the latter being destined for transportation, 'many of whom', Howard says, 'being sickly objects, and in want of clothes and bedding, I was persuaded would die in the passage'. For by this time the wheel had come full circle round again, and the mind of the authorities was turning back towards devising a new system of transportation. In 1787 the first convict-ships sailed for Australia.[30]

If the 'Hulks' really did show some improvement during Howard's later visit, they must have shortly afterwards relapsed again into their old bad conditions—probably as soon as the vigilance of reformers lessened, and government began making plans for a new transportation system. At any rate the appalling death-rate continued till near the close of the century. From 1776 to 1795 the total number of

convicts sent to Woolwich and to the lesser 'Hulks' at Langston and Portsmouth, was 7,999. Of these 2,207 were only temporarily at the 'Hulks' awaiting transportation to New South Wales; and of the remainder 1,946 died, and only 790 were pardoned and 1,610 discharged.[31] This means that on an average one convict out of every three died before he could complete his sentence.

Moreover, all that has been said so far takes no account of the social and moral noxiousness of the 'Hulks'. Yet all observers agreed that this was the worst feature of the whole system. 'The association of so many criminals' cried Howard 'is *utterly destructive* to morals.' Colquhoun speaks of the 'Hulks' as 'seminaries of profligacy and wickedness', which 'vomit forth at stated times upon the public a certain number of convicts, who having *no asylum*, *no home*, *no character*, and *no means of subsistence*, seem to have only the alternative of joining their companions in iniquity, and of adding strength to the criminal phalanx'.[32] Both the Act of 1776 and that of 1779 contained a provision that convicts were to receive, at discharge, a small gratuity of from £2 to £5, and decent clothing—presumably in order to give them a start in the world. But such a gratuity cannot have supported a single convict long enough for him to shake off the stamp and taint of the 'Hulks', much less to gain honest employment. The more hardened and experienced criminals made no attempt to reform at all: many of them began, even prior to their discharge, to arrange with their old friends, the

receivers, for the purchase of the plunder they expected to make after release. Those who wanted to reform and 'run straight' found themselves shunned by the honest part of the community, and forced back upon the society of their former associates. 'The result is' says Colquhoun 'that the major part return to their old courses.' When it is remembered that the greater part of the human material subjected to this system consisted, not of thugs and murderers, but of petty thieves, and burglars who had been sentenced for stealing a handkerchief or a watch, it will not be considered an exaggeration to say that the 'Hulks' were little more than manufactories of hardened criminals and centres for the diffusion of corruption.

The subject of this study, George Barrington, was one of those petty thieves for whose career the 'Hulks' provided such a terrible background. He was confined in them during their earliest, most experimental and worst period. He suffered all the horrors that have been described. And at last the revived system of transportation did for him what the 'Hulks' could never have done—provided the one chance in a thousand for his redemption and ultimate reconciliation with society.

CHAPTER IV

PAYING THE PENALTY (1777–1783)

BARRINGTON arrived on board the *Justitia* 'Hulk' shortly after John Howard had paid his second visit of inspection on January 16, 1777, which had confirmed him in his suspicion of the bad conditions prevailing. No more than eight of the convicts had so far died, but an epidemic of typhus was just beginning, the vessels were becoming overcrowded, and the food, clothing and ventilation were disgracefully inadequate. We can imagine the sense of degradation and despair with which a man like Barrington, accustomed—in spite of his criminal activities—to a refined and luxurious way of life among well-educated people, would find himself plunged into this floating hell to suffer, as another genteel thief, Vaux, was to suffer after him twenty years later, 'the horrible effects arising from the continual rattling of chains, the filth and vermin naturally produced by such a crowd of miserable inhabitants, the oaths and execrations constantly heard among them, and above all, the shocking necessity of associating and communicating more or less with so depraved a set of beings'.[1] Here indeed, 'all former friendships or connexions are dissolved, and a man will rob his

best benefactor, or even messmate, of an article worth one half-penny'. In these surroundings Barrington's best assets, his gentlemanly bearing and refined manners, would be a positive disadvantage to him, and lay him open to greater hostility from the wretches with whom he was imprisoned.

He was not, however, entirely deserted by his friends. Miss West missed her partner, and was depressed in spirits after his condemnation to the 'Hulks'. She made arrangements to lighten his sufferings by sending him an allowance of two guineas a week in money. The convicts were evidently not kept from all contact with the outer world: they were visited, not only by philanthropists and curious spectators, but also, at this time, by their own friends. Miss West visited Barrington as often as possible, and on one occasion enlivened the proceedings by exercising her profession, and picking the pocket of one of Barrington's fellow-convicts on board the *Justitia*, for his benefit. But her partner, who supported the theory of 'honesty among thieves', compelled her to restore the plunder.[2] Soon, however, even this comfort was taken from Barrington: for on February 14 Miss West was arrested outside Drury Lane Playhouse on a charge of stealing a watch, gold chain, aquamarine stone set in gold, two cornelian stones set in gold, and two seals set in gold, all belonging to Lieutenant Gilbert Affleck.[3] Five days later her trial came on at the Old Bailey Sessions before Justice Gould. The prosecutor, whose testimony was borne out by his brother, the Rev. John Affleck,

deposed to have met Miss West after the Oratorio at 11 p.m. in the passage leading out from the Playhouse on to Bridges Street. She jostled against him, and he felt his watch taken from him. Then, on his seizing her, he saw her try to pass the watch to a man wearing a black patch over one of his eyes, who was standing by—clearly a confederate. The Afflecks proceeded to seize the man, with the aid of a constable named Slade, and after an interval of a few minutes arrested Miss West also, the constable crying out 'Oh, sir, don't you know her? It is the famous Miss West!' The prisoner's defence was a complete denial, but she called no evidence and declared that she had not thought her trial would come on that day. At the end she was found guilty, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment in Newgate. According to the *Morning Post*, at the trial 'she dressed extremely gay, and seemed very little concerned at her fate'.[4] She was reported to have been tried twenty-five times in all at the Old Bailey, and to have escaped every time hitherto.[5] With her removal from the scene Barrington lost a loyal and useful ally.

In April the monotony of life on the 'Hulks' was varied by the arrival of a criminal whose notoriety was temporarily as great as that of Barrington himself. David Browne Dignam (or Dignum) had been for the best part of a year carrying on a series of ingenious frauds peculiarly suited to a society where graft and interest were the normal aids to a successful career in the public service. When Dignam was tried on March 12 before Sir John Fielding the accu-

sations against him were three.[6] First, he had extracted a premium of £1,200 from a Mr. Clarke, under pretence of securing his appointment as clerk of the minutes in the Customs House at Dublin: for which purpose he had forged and given Clarke a warrant purporting to be signed by Lord Weymouth, and his head clerk. Clarke of course never visited or intended to visit Dublin, to take up his clerkship: all he cared about was drawing the salary. So Dignam was able to play him a second trick, by giving him 'leave of absence' from his office for a holiday, in consideration of a further fee of £14 1*s*. Secondly, he had similarly deceived Josiah Browne into giving him a draft for £1,000 as reward for procuring him the office of Gazette-Writer to the Ministry—though that office was then securely held by someone else. Lastly, Dignam had played various pranks, such as charging the distinguished French dramatist Beaumarchais with being a spy in London, and pretending to disclose to Lord Suffolk a fictitious conspiracy to shoot King George III, which incriminated a number of Members of Parliament. For these various offences, Dignam was sentenced to five years' hard labour at the 'Hulks'. He was described at his trial as 'a very gentlemanlike man' who 'ill brooks the severity of his sentence'.[7] On his arrival at the 'Hulks' he attempted to put a bold face on the matter; he hired a boat for a guinea a week, and directed his black servant to come backwards and forwards to him from the shore. The first day he went on board, he ordered a dinner to be brought to him from

Woolwich. But the dinner was intercepted by Captain Erskine, the overseer, who ordered the servant to take it back and give it away to the first poor man he met. Dignam naturally found it hard to endure the horrible conditions on the 'Hulks'. He soon fell ill, and, though he was suspected of malingering and threatened with an extension of his sentence, had to be given medical treatment in July.[8]

Barrington's own behaviour was very different. It was consistent with all that we know of his character that, just as he deliberately stuck to his profession of picking pockets when he might easily through the influence of his society friends have secured a place with an honest salary attached to it, so he never rebelled against his punishment when convicted. His policy was to behave in an exemplary manner and win the favour of his gaolers, and this he somehow managed to do. A gentleman who visited the 'Hulks' in July to see the prisoners at work thus describes him: 'Barrington and Flint presented themselves to view with the rest of the criminals, wheeling ballast to the screens. Barrington, from an appearance the most genteel, is become an object of commiseration. His behaviour is mild, humble, and patient. He entertains a just sense of his dishonest course of life, and performs his lot with all possible industry in a state of true contrition; and it is hoped that, if set at liberty, he would make a proper atonement to the public for his offences, by becoming a useful member of society.'[9] What a consummate actor the man must have been, to have impressed a

casual spectator thus! The same hopes of reform were to be expressed over and over again throughout the remainder of his career in England.

We do not know how Barrington endured that awful summer, when his fellow-convicts were dying off around him like flies, and Parliament had not yet set its cumbrous machinery of inquiry to work. But somehow his 'mild, humble' behaviour softened the hearts of Duncan Campbell and his lieutenant. 'He was fatigued with hard labour, and harassed with all the evils of indigence, confinement, and obloquy; yet he bore up against all the weight of woe under which he laboured, with a degree of patience, resignation and constancy, worthy of a better cause.' [10] Barrington came to be regarded as a youthful 'first offender' who might be trusted to reform; and at the close of the year the contractor included his name among a small batch of convicts for a remission of whose sentence he appealed to the Secretary of State, as a reward for their exemplary conduct. Barrington received the Royal Pardon, and was released from the 'Hulks' at the beginning of 1778, having served less than one year of his sentence.[11]

All that he had experienced, however, does not seem to have deterred him in the slightest from an immediate return to his former way of living. His character was now irretrievably lost. He had no more rich friends. And he had no training or aptitude for any honest trade, except that of surgeon, which he obviously could not practise. But he was not so foolish as to put his head immediately into

BARRINGTON PICKING THE POCKET OF J. BROWN, ESQ. (OF BRANDFORD)

From the frontispiece to

The Memoirs of George Barrington, containing Every Remarkable Circumstance, etc.

the lion's mouth by haunting his old resorts, the theatre and the opera. During the next few months he turned his attention to a new field—the churches. Here one of his first exploits was picking the pocket of the famous 'bluestocking', Mrs. Montagu, in St. Paul's Cathedral, and robbing her of two guineas and seven shillings. On this occasion he was caught, and taken by a constable to the nearest tavern, the Crown in St. Paul's Churchyard, to be searched. But he eluded his captors by the simple expedient of retiring to the back of the tavern yard for a natural purpose, climbing over the boundary-wall into Pater Noster Row, and making off into the maze of small streets that surrounded the Cathedral.[12]

A little later he carried off a successful *coup* in picking the pocket of a young man named John Brown of Brandford of the sum of forty guineas, a gold watch, and some seals. Details of this episode, apart from the illustration shown, are lacking.[13]

But Barrington was this time to have a very short run for his money. It was known that he was frequenting churches, and a watch was kept, particularly by a constable named William Payne, who boasted that he would catch Barrington and bring him to the gallows. Now on Sunday, March 15, at eleven o'clock a well-known preacher, said to be 'the first pulpit orator in London',[14] Dr. Mylne, was to preach a charity sermon at St. Sepulchre's Church, Holborn, on behalf of the Royal Humane Society; and two celebrated lady singers, Miss Brown and Mrs. Mattocks, were to take part as

soloists in the music of the accompanying service. Both the text of the sermon ('For none of us liveth to himself'—*Romans* xiv. 7), and the opening verse of the anthem, specially composed for the occasion by Mr. Hull,

> Attend, ye sons of wealth! Attend!
> This fair humane design befriend:
> Promote the great, the glorious plan:
> This grace to heaven-transmitted man,[15]

seems curiously appropriate to what followed. A crowded congregation of eight thousand people assembled to hear Dr. Mylne; and among them was present Constable Payne, who was much excited to be told by five successive persons that Barrington was somewhere in the church. At first he looked and found nothing, but after a quarter of an hour's search he caught sight of his man, and then shadowed him for three-quarters of an hour from one door of the church to the other, never taking his eyes off his movements. He was assisted by an undertaker named Bethell, who knew Barrington by sight, and also by a subordinate who carried the key of the parish watch-house. Whenever Barrington looked his way, Payne ducked and hid his face from sight, in order to avoid giving the alarm. He soon saw Barrington with his hand in the pocket of a lady sitting in the fourth aisle, but apparently this was empty, for he could not see the pickpocket take anything out. At the end of half an hour, in spite of all his precautions, he found that Barrington had got sight of him, and was pointing him out to a companion

who sat next him, and who was none other than the famous Miss West, just released from Newgate at the expiry of her sentence. Whilst Payne was once more hiding his face, Barrington gave him the slip, got out of the church-door, and went off down Snow Hill. But Bethell set Payne on his track again, and they both gave chase, catching their prisoner just at the end of Cock Lane. Miss West had by that time vanished from sight.

Now the constable and his ally found themselves in a dilemma; they did not wish to let their notorious prisoner go, yet they were not at all certain that he had actually stolen anything. Payne therefore determined to arrest Barrington on the grounds of the attempt which he had seen him make on the unknown lady's pocket. He took him by the coat-sleeve and said: 'Mr. Barrington, you must go along with me.' Without fuss their prisoner turned back, and accompanied his captors to St. Sepulchre's watch-house (The Round House). This watch-house, which still stands to-day, consisted of three rooms, a basement, a ground-floor and a first-floor. The basement was a notorious 'black hole', in which men prisoners were confined; on one occasion it was so overcrowded that some of its occupants were suffocated to death during the night! The first-floor was used as the office of the watch. Up to this point Barrington had not spoken a word in his own defence. His captors thereupon proceeded to search him, and a superficial examination revealed a gold watch, which Payne took out of his fob. But the

prisoner claimed this as his own, and Payne therefore took him upstairs and lodged him in the lock-up under the care of Constable Fletcher, whilst he himself hurried back to the church to try and find a claimant for the watch. But the congregation was by now in great confusion; for other thieves besides Barrington had been present, and 'so great a disturbance arose from some persons finding their pockets picked, that it was judged necessary to stop before the conclusion, lest any unhappy accident might happen from the congregation too suddenly quitting the church'. Half an hour later, therefore, Payne returned to the watch-house without having discovered anyone who could lay claim to the watch: still, he brought with him a lady who declared she had lost two guineas and two dollars, together with several persons who had missed other property of various kinds. As for the woman whose pocket Payne had seen Barringon pick, it turned out that she had lost nothing—for her pocket was empty at the time.

The baffled constables now proceeded to search Barrington more thoroughly. They at once discovered that he was wearing three pairs of breeches, and that he had on him a purse containing thirteen guineas and a ten-pound bank-note. A bystander next threw out the suggestion that his shoes should be pulled off and examined; and this was done, Constable Fletcher stooping down and feeling the lower part of Barrington's breeches and his stockings. Whilst this was going on, Bethell suddenly noticed that Barrington had kept his hat on all this while: so

he called out, 'Pull off his hat.' But Barrington anticipated action by taking his hat off himself with his left hand. Then at last Bethell heard a sound as of something dropping on to the floor: and a moment later Fletcher picked up some object close to Barrington's left foot, and called out, 'Here is a watch has fallen from his head!' No one had actually seen the watch fall, but all had heard it hit the floor. Barrington appeared now overcome with shame. 'Do not reflect upon me,' he replied in answer to their questions, 'I am sufficiently troubled with my own unhappy feelings.'

Even at this stage, however, the evidence was incomplete. So Constable Payne inserted three advertisements in the Monday morning papers, giving details of the objects found on the prisoner; and as a result a Mrs. Elizabeth Ironmonger, a servant of Sir Charles Forbes, who lived in Westminster, came forward and identified as hers the second watch made of metal and covered with tortoise-shell, a silk watchstring, and a glass seal set in metal. She valued the objects at £3 0*s.* 4*d.* and declared that she had been carrying them in her pocket, wrapped in a handkerchief, when she attended the service at St. Sepulchre's. Barrington was next taken, on March 16, before Alderman Pugh, who committed him to Newgate to await trial at the Old Bailey Sessions. Barrington's behaviour at this hearing was, according to the *Gazetteer*, 'very decent, and showed not the hardened pickpocket'.[16] Evidently, as usual, he succeeded in making a good impression

even on those who had to judge him: for Alderman Pugh, after the commitment had been prepared, said to him: 'Young man, I am exceedingly sorry to be under the necessity of sending a person so capable of getting his own living by honest means to gaol.' 'Sir,' replied Barrington, 'you have shown yourself a man of feeling; sir, I am——' and then he put on his hat to hide his tears! Whilst he was being handcuffed, and again on the way to Newgate, he continued to weep copiously—and with good reason, for the coach which conveyed him was surrounded by an extremely violent mob, which tried to drag him out into the road to gratify its curiosity.

He was now 'the noted Barrington' indeed, and many people visited Newgate to see him, either out of curiosity or out of pity. Meantime Payne, in order to accumulate more evidence, went on advertising the other watch and the money which had been found on Barrington; but the day of the Old Bailey Sessions, April 29, 1778, arrived without any further identifications. When his case came on before Justice Blackstone and the first London Jury,[17] Barrington put a bold face on the matter, and took the offensive by complaining at the outset to the Court that several articles which were his own personal property had been taken from him and kept by the constables. Alderman Pugh, at his committal, he said—and truly—had promised that they should be restored to him after they had been advertised; but six weeks had since elapsed, and they were still detained. 'They are my own property,' he asserted,

'and they cannot be produced as evidence against me.' The Judge then ordered Payne to produce the gold watch and the cash, and to lay them on the table in Court. They were to be returned to Barrington if he proved himself entitled to them as a result of the trial.

After this preliminary skirmish, Elizabeth Ironmonger gave her evidence, which was not very conclusive. She had never seen Barrington. She was not certain that she had her watch with her when she went to church on the Sunday morning, though she had wound it up on the previous Friday night and looked at it on the Saturday night. But, if she had taken the watch with her to church, it was possible for her to have pulled it out of her pocket with her handkerchief and so lost it. When Payne, Fletcher and Bethell gave their witness, however, the case against Barrington grew blacker. Nothing could get over the finding of the watch in the watch-house under such suspicious circumstances. Barrington now addressed the Court in his own defence. He commenced by complaining that the newspapers had prejudiced his trial by defaming his character in advance. The jury could not be ignorant 'that newspapers in general are white and black and black and white'—that is, they are partisan and sensationalist. But the fact that he had committed a previous crime must not be taken to mean that he was likely to be guilty on this occasion. Constable Payne cherished a special animosity against him, and had boasted that he would bring him to the

gallows. Payne had a 'black and cruel imagination', and thought that his reputation as 'the little English carpenter' (evidently the constable's nickname) would not be complete without Barrington's conviction. Payne was 'destitute of any means of sensibility', and 'kisses the Book with as much apathy and concern as he would do any indifferent thing whatever'. In short, Payne was a common informer. As for the occasion of his arrest, Barrington declared that he had heard, while on a professional visit as surgeon to one of his patients, of the music to be performed at St. Sepulchre's. He had gone there for recreation, but had failed to find a seat in the crowded church. And on leaving the church he had found a metal watch, which he had put in his pocket with the intention of advertising it as lost property in due course. When arrested by Payne, he had tried to conceal the watch through fear.

This defence, clever as it was up to a point, was weak in one essential—the fact of Barrington's being found in possession of the stolen property. The offence for which he was indicted, 'stealing privately from the person', was capital; but this could hardly be sustained, as there was no one who could swear to having seen him actually commit the theft. Barrington therefore received the benefit of the doubt, and was found guilty of stealing, 'but not privately from the person'—in other words, guilty of stealing by finding only. Before sentence was passed, the prisoner pleaded for mercy, and made one of his usual promises of reformation. 'I am a young man. I am

by profession a surgeon. Let me be permitted to enter into His Majesty's service, and I will endeavour to discharge my trust with assiduity and attention.' It is possible to believe that, if Government *had* listened to this plea, and found a place for Barrington as a public servant, some fifteen years of wasted life might have been saved to the nation, and his talents for good brought into play while he was still in the prime of his life. But it was not to be. The Judge passed the usual sentence, which was inevitable in view of his record, of five years' more ballast-heaving on the Thames 'Hulks'. Once more Barrington was removed on board the *Justitia* at Woolwich.

Barrington's former partner, Miss West, was also caught again soon after his conviction.[18] On June 8 the body of the great Earl of Chatham, just deceased, was lying in state in the Painted Chamber at Westminster, open to the gaze of the public. Mrs. Mary Bastin, of Round Court in the Strand, was on her way through the Matted Gallery into the Chamber, with her child by her side, when she was accosted by Miss West and another woman, who pretended to be her aunt. Ostensibly they offered to help Mrs. Bastin to get through the crowd; but actually Miss West twitched her purse from her and attempted to escape. Mrs. Bastin called for help, whereupon Mr. Lucas, ex-High Constable of Westminster, came up and took Miss West into custody. No purse was found on her, but it was later discovered on a ledge in a lobby leading to the office

of the Board of Works, where she had dropped it. Miss West was committed for trial by Justice Sampson Wright, and was duly tried and convicted on July 15, before Justice Buller.[19] She pretended that her name was Mary Groves, and declared that she had 'a material witness that is not come to town', who could prove her innocence. She was sentenced to be branded and imprisoned for three years in Newgate. This was the last of her exploits, for the unfortunate woman caught gaol-fever and died within a fortnight of the expiry of her sentence.[20]

Barrington was removed to the 'Hulks' immediately after his conviction, but the experience he had already undergone there made him ready to do anything to avoid his fate if possible. He tried several times to escape from the *Justitia*, and it seems likely that he was implicated in one or both of two terrible convict insurrections that occurred during the summer. Escapes from the 'Hulks' had been spasmodically attempted ever since the system had begun. Thus in November, 1776, eight convicts had seized the arms chest on board the *Justitia*, presented pistols at the head of their guards, and driven them down into the hold, whilst they themselves escaped from the ship in a boat which had been purposely brought alongside by their friends.[21] This exploit served as the pattern for subsequent plots. During the summer of 1778 conditions on board the 'Hulks' were still unreformed, and the convicts were being ravaged by fever; at the same time Sir Charles Bunbury's Parliamentary Committee was inquiring

into the matter, and the convicts were stimulated by hopes for the improvement of their lot. On Sunday afternoon, June 7, a body of the convicts numbering about thirty-six [22] rose suddenly and forced their way into the Captain's cabin while the guards were at dinner. Having secured firearms and cutlasses, after 'a most terrible engagement' they overpowered the guards; and twenty-two of the convicts then jumped into a boat lying alongside the 'Hulks' and rowed across the river to the north bank, where they landed. They then broke open a smith's shop, and with the utensils they found knocked off their irons.[23] In the meantime, a party of matrosses from Woolwich Arsenal started off in pursuit of them, and immediately recaptured five of the runaways. The main body of the escaped convicts was overtaken at East Ham, where a skirmish took place, in which one of the convicts was killed and three were taken, while the rest fled into Epping Forest.[24] Some of these latter made good their escape altogether, but others were retaken at intervals during the next three months.[25]

The second insurrection was planned on a larger scale. According to the Woolwich correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*,[26] Captain Stewart Erskine, the officer in charge of the 'Hulks', received an anonymous letter on the morning of Tuesday, September 29, warning him that a revolt was in agitation among the convicts, in the course of which his, and his officers', safety would be greatly endangered. 'The Captain, upon this warning, immediately went

on shore, where about 250 convicts were then at work, and cautioned his people, who were placed to guard them, to be prepared for such an event. Shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon, about 150 of them assembled in a body, having first armed themselves with pikes, taken from the *chevaux de frise*, and with axes and spades, and proceeded to the only pass where they could effect their escape, which was firmly guarded by about 20 well-armed men. The Captain remonstrated strongly, and repeatedly endeavoured by gentle means to dissuade them from such an attempt which, if persisted in, must cost some of them their lives. This had no effect on their desperate leaders, one of whom instantly attacked and wounded the Captain, still pressing forward to the pass, throwing showers of heavy stones, and threatening murder to all who opposed them. At last the ship's people were obliged to make use of their firearms, which, with the assistance of those of a party of artillery, obliged the convicts to retire. Two of their leaders were killed on the spot, and seven or eight more were much wounded. Immediately on the affray being over they were sent on board, and seemed to repent of their rashness. Several gentlemen unconnected with this service happened to be present, some of whom assisted with much spirit in quelling the riot; one or two of them, with some of the ship's crew, received several severe blows and bruises in the scuffle.' All was not over, however; for on the next day, about one o'clock, thirty-six of the convicts tried again to escape from

one of the 'Hulks'. But the alarm was given to their guards, who immediately opened fire upon the wretched men, killing four outright and wounding eighteen more. The rest were recaptured, carried back to their lighter, and secured in irons.

Barrington's name is nowhere specifically mentioned in connexion with these two insurrections, which occurred during the first few months of his imprisonment. But if, as is certainly possible, he did try to join unsuccessfully in them, this fact would account for his subsequent despair and attempt at suicide. He stabbed himself in the breast with a penknife: and the wound was 'deep and dangerous', but not mortal.[27] He was given medical attention in time, removed to the hospital-ship, and brought to a recovery. But with the bad conditions prevailing, it was no wonder that the healing was very slow 'and seemed, after near two years' continuance, to bring a consumption on the unhappy patient'. In his own words, 'colds that I had repeatedly caught had ulcerated my lungs, and labour often exceeding my strength by day, and putrefied air by night, had greatly reduced and wasted my frame. The surgeons, finding that the usual medicines were not sufficient, applied to the superintendent, and obtained a milk and vegetable diet for me. This was a regimen never allowed there, but like extreme unction to those that were at the point of death.' [28]

At the beginning of 1781 we get a glimpse of how Barrington was faring from two letters which he

addressed to 'a very worthy and well-known clergyman of the Church of England'. These letters were written on behalf of a fellow-prisoner of Barrington's who was also dangerously ill, and had reason to hope that this clergyman would intercede with Lord Mansfield to have him pardoned. Barrington's letters were most ingenious, and perfectly calculated to transfer to himself some of the pity which he was soliciting for his dying friend. The first is dated from the *Justitia*, January 4, 1781:

REV. SIR,

Though a stranger to your person, I am acquainted with the virtues which adorn your character. You have been represented to me as a gentleman assiduous in the performance of all the duties prescribed by your holy office, and possessing a heart teeming with philanthropy and benevolence, even to the meanest and most abject of your fellow-creatures.

From thence I am led to hope that the freedom I use in addressing you on this occasion will readily meet with your pardon; and I am the more encouraged to hope this, as it is not to solicit for myself, but merely to pity an unfortunate young man, who has often spoken of you in the highest terms of respect, gratitude and veneration. Undoubtedly, Rev. Sir, you will be sensibly affected at knowing that he lies now almost at the point of death. Fortitude is not the lot of mankind: Heaven, for its own wise purposes, has been partial in the distribution of that, as

of its other favours. Feeling reflections upon past and present circumstances have, I apprehend, induced a depression of spirits, from whence his disorder has originated. In consequence of his illness, he has been removed from the 'Hulk' he belonged to, to that which is called the Hospital; and, if we may be allowed to judge from appearances, nothing but change of air, or the immediate interposition of Providence, can produce a restoration of health. I have frequently, in the hours of conversation, heard him mention that, under God, you had been the means of preserving him from an ignominious death; and that, stranger as he was in this Kingdom, without a relation or native friend to assist him, your goodness was still the only source of his hope, as he must inevitably sink under the pressure of his heavy sentence, if he did not again find in you a mediator and deliverer. As you have been pleased, Reverend Sir, to promise that you would take an opportunity of interceding for him with Earl Mansfield, in order to obtain a mitigation of his sentence; and as he himself is incapable of writing to inform you of his present deplorable state, I have voluntarily presumed to do it, that your humane endeavours may be accelerated—that they may not be excited too late. Perhaps, Reverend Sir, it may not be convenient for you to be an eye-witness to the state he is in: but I trust you will have the goodness to act in such a manner as to let him perceive that you, who are his principal dependance, under God, have not entirely forgot him. If any thing in this world can afford the

unhappy young man any consolation, and enable him to struggle with the malady which consumes him, that I am convinced will.

I am, with greatest respect,
Reverend Sir,
Your most humble,
And most obedient Servant,
(Signed) GEORGE BARRINGTON.[29]

Who was 'this unhappy young man'? Was it by any chance Barrington himself? Was the story a clever figment of his mind, designed to draw attention to his own case? Or was there really some Irish compatriot of his lying ill on the hospital-ship at this time, and getting Barrington to pen these eloquent letters on his behalf? We shall never know. At any rate, the clergyman returned some answer, which is lost, to the appeal: and Barrington followed it up by writing a second letter on February 16:

SIR,

Strange as it may appear to you, yet it is very true that I had not the honour of receiving your letter, though dated the 13th ult., till to-day; the delay I have experienced in this instance, however disagreeable, being nothing uncommon, but one of the numerous train of unhappy circumstances to which past misconduct has subjected me, in common with many other unfortunates, by bringing us to this place of distress and sorrow.

As some prisoners were lately brought down here

from ——, I suppose, Rev. Sir, you are apprised by this time, that —— is no longer in a condition to derive any benefit from your humane endeavours, God having been pleased to call him away from his misery the 15th ult. But as I have every reason to hope that he was not remiss in preparing for the awful change he had reason to expect, I know not whether most to rejoice or mourn, to envy or pity him on the occasion. With regard, Reverend Sir, to myself, I trust that the proper feelings are awakened in my breast: indeed, I reflect, with much shame, that they have lain dormant so long, but I hope it will appear that they are not entirely obliterated. I view with the deepest compunction the errors of my past life—errors which have drawn upon me the displeasure of God and the displeasure of good men, blasted me in fame and fortune, and plunged me into inexpressible misery without leaving me a single advantage in return. Painful as these reflections are, I endeavour to keep dispondency at a distance: resolved patiently to abide the determination of that Supreme Being, who has mercifully preserved my life even amidst the greatest dangers, and who, if it is thy pleasure that I should return again to the valuable part of society, will, I trust, endue me with fortitude sufficient to act in every situation as a worthy member of it. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your excellent advice and charitable wishes: they will not, I hope, be thrown away upon me, but that my future conduct will strongly demonstrate my gratitude to God by real reformation. Permit

me, in return, to present my humble but fervent wishes that your prosperity may be equal to your merit: few, I believe, would then be happier.

I am,
With profound respect,
Reverend Sir,
Your unfortunate, but most humble,
And obedient servant,
(Signed) GEORGE BARRINGTON.[29]

Apparently this second letter met with no response.

Barrington grew worse and worse in health, and petitioned the Government for a remittance of part of his sentence. At last, in the fourth year of his imprisonment, his usual luck returned to him. A gentleman of rank and consequence, Sir M. L., who was also of a philanthropic disposition, happened to visit the 'Hulks' and to inquire into the state of the convicts. In the course of his inspection he got into conversation with Barrington, and was so shocked by the contrast between his superior language and manners and his emaciated and squalid appearance that he determined to help him to secure what he wanted.[30] He used his influence with the Government so successfully that four years after his conviction at the Old Bailey, Barrington was granted the King's Pardon, on condition that he left the country and never returned. Barrington accepted this condition, and was released on April 30, 1782. He had always represented himself as an Irishman, and naturally therefore it was to Ireland that he now

made up his mind to go. His benefactor generously supplied him with a sum of money to meet the expense of his journey, and within a week of leaving London, where he stayed only to collect a few necessaries, Barrington had reached Dublin, travelling by the Chester stage-coach.

Possibly he had thoughts of making a new start, even of finding honest employment, in his native country after all these years of absence. But if so, he was soon disillusioned. There were in Dublin plenty of people who had run across his path in London, and who knew him by sight. He was irrevocably labelled a pickpocket, and 'he was so striking or so notorious a character, that to be known and to be suspected were one and the same thing'. Before he had been long in the city, he was arrested by the Irish police on a charge of picking the pocket of an Irish nobleman of a gold watch and some money at one of the playhouses, and lodged in Dublin New Gaol. But the charge against him broke down for lack of clear evidence at his trial, and he was acquitted. On this occasion he made one of his brightest and most ingenious speeches in self-defence. He professed to regard with pained surprise the unaccountable prejudice which had existed against him in England. He had been discharged, he declared, as a reformed character, from 'a place which the legislature formally and expressly declares to have been appointed for the express purpose of operating the reformation of young offenders and rendering them useful and respectable members of

the Commonwealth'.[31] He argued that it was impossible for any man possessed of sensibility or reflexion to remain uninterested in his case, and not even to feel the most lively compassion for him. 'Gentlemen,' he concluded, 'I solemnly declare that I am not guilty of the charge now brought against me: nor does the evidence produced apply to me. Thus supported by conscious innocence, I wait for your verdict without any painful apprehension, as knowing that, to men of your liberality of sentiment, I am not an object of those prejudices that operated so fatally against me in another place; and that your decree will be the result of feeling hearts, directed by enlightened understandings.' What Irish jury could resist such an appeal, from an Irishman, for protection against English unfairness?

Nevertheless, Barrington felt disappointed with Dublin, and after his acquittal he once more left Ireland, and crossed over to Scotland, where he tried to break new ground at Edinburgh. But in the Scottish capital 'the police is more exact and more severe than in most other parts of the British dominions'.[32] He was kept under observation, and obviously suspected of intent to steal. Not liking this, Barrington soon decamped from Edinburgh, 'where his gleanings were comparatively small', and turned southwards. He halted at Chester, where the annual July Linen Fair was in progress, and here, by a stroke of luck, contrived to get possession of £600 in cash and bank-notes. With this booty he returned to London, 'to which place he seems to have been

attracted by a kind of unaccountable fatality'. At first, however, he was wise enough to lie low and avoid discovery; with the money he had brought from Chester he lived 'in a genteel but retired manner' near Soho Square, during the winter of 1782–3. The only episode that occurred was an unfortunate accident. A fire broke out in Greek Street, close to his lodgings; he went out to have a look at it and, while leaning against a post, was struck on the head by a falling chimney-stack. His skull was fractured by a brick, but not fatally; in due course he made a complete recovery.[33]

As time went on Barrington grew bolder again. He began to frequent the theatres, the Opera-House, and the Pantheon, with tolerable success. But it was a dangerous game to play. He was soon noticed, suspected, and closely watched; and at last he was arrested and committed to Newgate. Once more he was discharged for want of evidence, but in the meantime his identity had been established, and he was unexpectedly detained at the instance of Duncan Campbell for having violated the terms of his pardon by returning to England. On this charge, made on the oath of one James Boyick, Barrington was brought to trial at the Old Bailey on Saturday, January 18, 1783. As the fact of Barrington's return was self-evident, his only line of defence was to throw himself on the mercy of his judges. 'By the ingenuity of some reputable twig of the law,' as the *Morning Herald* had it, he took an affidavit that he had never understood the terms of his pardon to mean per-

petual banishment from the kingdom; if he *had* known it meant that, he would never have accepted it at all.[34]

This affidavit he supported by a pathetic speech in Court. After referring to the severity of his sentence and describing how his sufferings on the 'Hulks' had ruined his health and led to his liberation, he declared that 'whatever reports may have been propagated to my disadvantage, I have done nothing since that day, that a man need be ashamed of; but, my Lord, I have learned that a man whose character has once been blemished will always be suspected. I was merely for a name apprehended, and some time afterwards I understood that detainers were lodged against me for not fulfilling the conditions of my pardon. I will appeal to the Court, whether it was not contrary to every principle of justice, equity and law, when a very severe sentence has nearly expired, to saddle me with the condition of being transported for ever: of being a fugitive for ever from my native country—which would of itself have been considered as a very severe sentence. My Lord, knowing that I had asserted nothing but facts, I subpœnaed Mr. Campbell and the surgeons attending the "Hulks": the surgeons were to speak to the state of my health when I was in a deep decline, and Mr. Campbell that he might speak to my behaviour. My Lord, no man who has anything to fear will subpœna his prosecutor, and Mr. Campbell was mine. For these reasons, my Lord, I humbly trust that neither prejudices, nor

falsehood, not plausible pretences, nor uncharitable reports, will deprive me of that candour and justice, which so eminently distinguish your Lordship: I trust you will consider my long sufferings. I trust you will consider my behaviour, and the state I now am in, labouring under a nervous fever and shortness of breath.' [35]

In spite of this plea, the Recorder could do no more than emphasise the fact of the conditions attaching to Barrington's pardon. 'No doubt his Majesty was actuated by his usual wisdom and goodness. Probably it was thought, from the offences of which you had before been convicted, that you were an unsafe person to be trusted at large within this kingdom, where you might have formed bad connexions; and that it was better for yourself and the public that you should leave it. But whatever the motives were, his Majesty's pardon now appears, that pardon is the only excuse that you can have for not being at this moment on board the "Hulks", to which you were sentenced.' The Court had no discretionary powers to vary the terms of the pardon; and in any case banishment was not, as Barrington had suggested, so severe a punishment as transportation, which involved personal servitude and slavery. As for the prisoner's state of health, 'if your ill-health is such now as to render it dangerous to serve the time, that will be a reason for your being detained, till you can with safety be removed; or it may be a ground for the further extension of his Majesty's mercy'. But for the moment his old sentence was in

force again, and he was liable to be sent back on board the *Justitia*.

This cold logic forced from Barrington a cry of despair: 'My Lord, my disease is of such a nature, it is not in the power of medicine to relieve me if I go down to that place—and certain death must be the result!' His looks bore out this plea, and again, by some mysterious exercise of charm which the bare words of the law-reporters cannot preserve for us, Barrington won the sympathies of press and public. 'He was taken from the Bar' the *Morning Herald* observed 'and appeared in a deep decline, so that in all probability this young man, to whom nature has been so liberal, and whose education is a reproach to his morals, will die a wretched example of the certain consequences of abilities misapplied.' But the prophecy proved false. The Court promised Barrington sufficient respite in custody before his removal to the 'Hulks' to give him time to petition the King for mercy; and later he was informed that he would be permitted to serve out the remainder of his sentence—eleven months—in the form of simple imprisonment in Newgate.

CHAPTER V

'SECOND WIND' (1783–1789)

At the very end of 1783 Barrington was once more a free man, and for some years he succeeded in keeping himself out of the clutches of the law. But the circumstances of his life were far harder now than they had been before his two convictions. In the first place, the London police system was slowly growing stronger: the most important public functions were now regularly attended by the Bow Street runners, who served at least to frighten the most notorious thieves off the field. And Barrington was perhaps the most notorious of all. The newspapers followed his doings, and gave faithful publicity to his exploits: he was always referred to by them as 'the noted George Barrington' or 'the celebrated Mr. Barrington'. Numbers of people knew him by sight. Though there were other gentlemen-pickpockets, none was more smartly dressed or more gentlemanly in manner than he. And the London of the eighteenth century was still a small world, with but a limited aristocratic 'society' at its head; the atmosphere of a present-day country town prevailed, in which the leading citizens are known to one another personally, and 'notoriety' is

easily gained and with difficulty shaken off, except through absence. So Barrington could make no more spectacular *coups*; he must try to keep out of the limelight, and yet somehow or other contrive to make a livelihood. The old pretence of practising as a surgeon he still kept up, but there is no evidence that he turned his hand to this or any other honest occupation for serious profit. We do know, however, that he became very cautious after his release from Newgate and 'being connected with some very adroit accomplices, was not so easily detected as he used to be'. Still, his position was precarious. 'He lived in a state of perpetual alarm, was exposed to frequent interruptions, and was several times taken into custody.' [1] His strongest asset was his own eloquence, which was improving and to which he mainly owed his escape in the two following emergencies.

On January 31, 1784, Sir Godfrey Webster, Bart., M.P., was attending the Opera at the Haymarket.[2] After the performance he tried to get into the tea-room for refreshment, but the room and lobbies were so crowded that he could hardly enter; and whilst he was in the doorway his new gold watch-chain caught on a lady's clothes and had to be disentangled. As he was putting his watch back into his fob, he noticed at his side a well-dressed gentleman wearing a white marcella quilted waistcoat, an underwaistcoat, a new plain blue coat, black satin breeches, and clouded silk stockings—in a word, a dandy. This gentleman, who was none other than

George Barrington, leaned against his right shoulder. As they looked at each other, Sir Godfrey felt a 'gentle pulsation' or slight throbbing just above his right cuff. It was very severe weather outside, but the Opera-House itself was crowded and hot; and he thought it singular that anyone should be feeling cold enough to shiver at that moment. But when, a few seconds later, he discovered that his silk purse, containing ten and a half guineas in gold, and a fifty-guinea note of Hamersley's, was missing, he at once put two and two together: turning to Lord Westmoreland, who stood near by, he told him he had been robbed.

The fine gentleman who had leaned against his shoulder had now moved away, and Webster had never seen him before, nor did he know his name. Had he known it, he declared afterwards, he would have seized the suspect on the spot. But Barrington was so well-dressed that Webster could not feel absolutely sure that it was he that had committed the theft. He therefore followed Barrington through the lobby out to the box-office: where he thought he saw him address 'a little man in a dark brown or a snuff-coloured suit of cloathes' and take him by the arm saying, 'Is the carriage ready?' Next, Barrington turned round, walked into the lobby again, and appeared to join some ladies, whom he accompanied into the great hall, where the servants were waiting in a crowd. He then descended a flight of steps lined with flunkeys on either side, raising himself on tiptoe as he went, as if he were looking out

for his carriage. But as soon as he got out of the theatre into the arcades he began to take longer steps; and the moment he reached the pavement outside, he ducked under the pole of a carriage and gained the centre of the street. Webster's suspicions were now confirmed, and he began to pursue Barrington in earnest. The latter made off at a run down the Haymarket to Pall Mall, where he was at last caught trying to get under a coach. As soon as Webster came up with him, Barrington cried out, 'Zounds, sir, what do you mean? I am a gentleman.' 'Sir,' replied Sir Godfrey, 'it is an awkward thing to mention, but I think you have robbed me of my purse.' To prevent Barrington's escape, the Baronet caught him by the coat with the words: 'Sir, do not compel me to be rough with you.' A crowd had now gathered, and a coach was called, into which Barrington and the Baronet were on the point of getting, when the latter had a misgiving that perhaps he might somehow lose his prey by this proceeding. Getting out again, therefore, he insisted on Barrington's returning with him to the Opera-House, where there was a constable on duty. The constable called up Corporal Bridgen of the Guard, who at Webster's request supplied a file of soldiers to escort Barrington to St. James's Watch-house.

All this while Barrington kept repeating to his captor: 'Sir, have a care, I am not the sort of person you take me for, you will get yourself into a scrape. Pray, sir, do not expose me: take care what you are about!' Webster, losing his temper, swore that

nothing Barrington could say would induce him to let go. 'But if you have any friends,' he added, 'that can speak for you, I do not wish to expose you. I will take you to a tavern or coffee-house, and you may send to your friends, but I will never quit you.' Still, Barrington's resolute bearing made him hesitate. 'If I have done you any injury,' he went on, 'I will beg your pardon or do anything you wish. I am the last man in the world to do a thing of this kind unoffended.' Barrington nodded, and made him no further answer.

As soon as the choleric baronet had safely lodged Barrington at the watch-house, he tipped the soldiers, told Barrington who he was, and desired to know his name in exchange, in order that he might charge him next morning. But the latter gracefully declined this request with a low bow and a flourish of the hand, and Webster was about to leave him in despair and go home, when one of the constables reminded him that the prisoner had not been searched. This suggestion evidently annoyed Barrington, who walked up to Webster and said, 'Sir, I am sure you are a person of too much feeling and delicacy to have me searched by vulgar fellows of this sort. My dress and appearance do not make that necessary.' Nevertheless they insisted on stripping him of his clothes and searching him minutely, even to his hair: but they only found on him a few shillings, some papers, a small pair of compasses, a box of Irwin's cough lozenges, and a lancet which Webster identified as his property.

No sooner had the Baronet departed than Barrington was identified by Michael Angelo Taylor,[3] Sir Robert Taylor's son, who happened to pass the watch-house at that moment. Webster was therefore called back, and asked to sign his deposition and fix a date for prosecuting the pickpocket. An amicable and polite discussion between Webster and Barrington followed. 'Mr. Barrington,' declared his prosecutor, 'if that is your name, I do not wish to oppress you or any man. I do not wish to hurry or drive you.' Barrington made a bow and replied to this, 'Sir, your time is mine.' With this exchange of courtesies the two parted.

Three weeks later, on February 25, Barrington took his trial at the Old Bailey Sessions before Baron Perryn. The offence—stealing privately from the person—was a capital one; but there were certain features of the case which seemed to favour the prisoner—principally, the fact that none of Webster's money had actually been found on his person. In cross-examination, too, it appeared that Webster was not quite clear in his recollection of what had happened in the opera-house: whether he had really felt his purse in his pocket just before Barrington leaned against him, and whether other persons beside Barrington had not passed by him at the door of the refreshment-room. He was certain that he had kept Barrington in sight the whole time during the pursuit, except for three or four seconds; but he had not seen Barrington pass, or give anything to the man in snuff-coloured clothes in the lobby. Under

these circumstances, the prisoner had a very favourable opportunity for the display of his ingenuity and eloquence in making his defence: and this opportunity he used to the full in the following speech:

'May it please your Lordship, and you Gentlemen of the Jury, I had an opportunity to see the opera on this Saturday night, through the means of a performer belonging to the house, who received from me at the same time some surgical assistance. When the opera was over, I had proceeded as far in my way home as the outward door; and I found the footway to the right and left so taken up with chairs, chairmen and linkboys, that it appeared to me the best way to go straight across if I could. I had another reason for this choice: I had appointed to meet an acquaintance at the Orange Coffee-house. It was a fine moonlight night, a very severe frost, and the ground in the middle of the street as dry, or drier, than the foot-pavement. I had got about halfway across the street, when one of the many carriages which are assembled there on such occasions, driving very hard, obliged me to use my endeavours to avoid the danger of being run over. I proceeded some little way down the Haymarket, within about 100 yards of the Orange Coffee-house, when Sir Godfrey laid hold of me. I had never seen him before, and he charged me with having his purse. I did not make him any resistance, or endeavour to avoid giving him every satisfaction in my power. I advised him to go into the Coffee-house—and I hope I shall not offend in informing the Court, that he

swore in the most violent manner that he would not be convinced. I was brought to the watch-house immediately; and when I was there, previous to my being searched, I told him he was mistaken. He told me he suspected me, and if he was mistaken, he would give me every satisfaction—he would fight me, or anything else. I was searched, as you have heard; and neither his property, nor the property of any other person was found in my possession. You observe, Gentlemen, the prosecutor has not said that I ran till I reached the outward door. He has said that, after he missed his purse, he followed me first in the inner lobby, from then down the large flight of stone stairs, and then through a large stone hall. He followed so close that he heard, or fancied he heard me say something about a coach or servants—expressions which might have been made use of by some gentleman who was there, and mistakenly attributed to me. You will perceive, Gentlemen, that in all this time of his following me, he did not accuse or molest me, though it is evident —and I hope will appear to you evident—that he might have done it ten times over. I do not know whether you have been able to perceive the temper and disposition of the prosecutor; but this is certain, that he is fiery and hot—and of that I could give you many convincing proofs. You will be the best judge whether, if his suspicions were well grounded, he would not have charged me on the spot, and taken me into custody. As to my running, I hope it may be accounted for: the coldness of the night, or a

desire of being home betimes, may induce a person to make more than ordinary speed.

'This is my case, and I most humbly hope the Court will hear me with patience. It is not my interest or my inclination to offend any person in this honourable Court: and if I should happen to drop any expression which may not be strictly proper, I trust it will not be construed into an offence, but that it will be imputed to arise from that anxiety and desire of vindication, which every man in my unhappy situation must naturally feel. Gentlemen of the Jury, if you were asked whether any rumour or report to my disadvantage had reached your ears, unconnected with the present, you would perhaps say, Yes. If you were asked again, whether you would suffer yourselves to be influenced in the smallest degree by such a rumour or report, I am sure you would with one voice cry, God forbid! I trust, therefore, Gentlemen, that no insinuations, or rumour, or suggestions, from what channel soever you may have received them, will induce you to deprive me of life, or to condemn me without clear and substantial proof. But as prejudices from such reports will sometimes penetrate into the minds of the best and wisest, and make an impression before they themselves are aware of it, you will do well, Gentlemen—and I most humbly and earnestly beg of you—before you determine your verdict on this occasion, to ask yourselves one question. Would you, on the evidence you have now heard, condemn any other person of whom you had never heard anything

before the present time? Gentlemen, my life is in your hands; and I do not address myself to your feelings, but to your candour and impartiality.'

Barrington's speech on this occasion exhibits his very considerable power as an orator. Nothing could be more skilful than the way in which he impresses the Jury with the contrast between his own and Sir Godfrey Webster's manners; turns the prejudice against his character into an argument for his acquittal; and naturally accounts, piece by piece, for the suspicious circumstances pointing towards him. In the summing-up which followed, the Judge pointed out that the whole of the case rested on Sir Godfrey's unsupported evidence; this evidence certainly carried presumption with it, but 'it seems to be such a sort of a case, that whatever your suspicions are, there does not appear to be sufficient grounds to convict him of a capital offence'. Naturally, with such direction, the Jury acquitted Barrington at once. During the remainder of this year we hear no more of Barrington.

But almost a twelvemonth after the Webster case, on January 26, 1785, a young gentleman named John Bagshaw went with a friend named Francis Lavall to see Mrs. Siddons act Lady Macbeth at Drury Lane Playhouse.[4] They intended to sit in the pit, and for this purpose joined a queue of persons who were waiting in the pit passage to secure their seats. Seven or eight other people had entered the queue after them, when Bagshaw suddenly felt somebody at his breeches-pocket, and on putting his hand

down, found that his watch had been taken. He had already noticed a man in an overcoat—that was Barrington—standing close behind him on his right: and when he turned round after his loss, he at once perceived Barrington with his back turned, making his way out of the pit-entrance. Without speaking, Bagshaw and Lavall followed Barrington; and as soon as they had got clear of the others, Bagshaw laid hold of him and cried: 'Sir, you have got my watch!' 'Have *I* got your watch?' retorted Barrington, apparently in surprise; but at the same time he tried to get away from his captor, and held out his hand palm downwards in the direction of a bystander who appeared, suspiciously like an accomplice, in the nick of time. Suddenly there was a sound of broken glass, and Bagshaw perceived his watch lying on the ground close to Barrington. He stooped down, picked it up, and put it back in his pocket.

Meanwhile a scuffle had begun. Barrington tried to wriggle out of Bagshaw's grasp: while the mysterious bystander took his part and caught hold of Bagshaw, and threw him to the ground on his side. He sprang up again, however, and followed the suspects: before they had gone ten yards the alarm was raised, and Barrington was arrested, without making any resistance. He was taken at once to Bow Street Station, and the next day committed for trial. The indictment upon which he was charged before Baron Eyre and the second Middlesex Jury at the Old Bailey on Wednesday, April 7, was for

feloniously stealing a watch with a gold case, value £5, a watch-chain value 10*s*., two stone seals set in gold, value 20*s*., and a metal key value 1*d*., all the property of John Bagshaw, Esq. On this occasion Barrington employed counsel, a barrister named Silvester, to cross-examine the witnesses.

Once again it was demonstrated how difficult it was to get conclusive evidence against a pickpocket. Bagshaw was shortsighted, and had only heard, but not seen, the watch fall to the ground. His friend Lavall likewise had only the evidence of his ears, and admitted that he was 'rather confused' by the scuffle and not very certain how many bystanders there were, or how near they might have been standing to Barrington. The prisoner himself vigorously denied that any accomplice had been present. 'The evening in which this matter is stated to have happened,' he said, 'I went to see the play. It was "Macbeth". The house was filled early, and hearing it mentioned that there was no more room at that side, I was going to another part of the house, when I was accosted by the prosecutor. . . . There were several persons present at the time. An altercation took place, during which a bystander cried out "There is a watch on the ground." This was at some yards' distance from him. . . . It has been stated that, when he accused me, I extended my hand, as if I was offering something to some person. Whether I did or not I cannot take upon me to say: but I trust that it will not be considered as an unnatural position for any person so accused, to extend his arm

or hand.' The prosecutor had seen nothing in his hand, had not seen him drop anything or give anything to another person. 'As for the scuffle which had taken place, I most humbly beg leave to observe that in consequence of the alarm a crowd came, and hearing a charge made, and seeing two people disputing, both decently dressed and much alike in height, and not immediately knowing which was the accused person, some, more violent than the rest, might have laid hold of *him*, as others did of *me*, until they were satisfied which was the accuser.' There were no solid proofs of any accomplices, and 'I trust that the justice and humanity of this Honourable Court will not allow that a man, though he may be unfortunate enough to have a blemished character, shall be made responsible for offences which others have committed, or that a surmise or supposition will be suffered to supply the place of clear convincing proofs. Whether those that have appeared on this occasion are of that kind or not, would be presumption in me to say: I humbly hope they are not.'

After this last curious remark, Barrington proceeded to his peroration:

'It has been my misfortune to have suffered much from ill-natured report, and from wanton invention, at a time too, when I can truly say that I had been using my best endeavours to merit commendation instead of reproach; and I thought to have had it in my power to have given convincing proofs of this to the Court, from a gentleman in whose employment

I have been for some time, but who is now absent on his affairs in Ireland. . . . Circumstances have been related of me which never happened, and others have been cruelly exaggerated. I do not say this in order to excite your compassion, but to allay inflammation. Gentlemen, prejudice sees through a glass, which makes things appear quite different from what they really are. You best know, Gentlemen, whether, in consequence of anything of that kind, your minds may have contracted a bias unfavourable to me. If, upon reflection, you think that they have, I am sure you will carefully examine your breasts: and if, upon a cool and impartial consideration of the evidence alone, you think or doubt, that it is not of that perfect and substantial nature, which should induce you to find a verdict against any *other person*, I am sure you will not against *me*, since you must be fully sensible, that in such a case it would be a conviction from prejudice, and not from evidence. But, Gentlemen, I have an implicit confidence in your goodness: and I trust you will not only lay aside all passion and prejudice yourselves, but that you will be pleased to make a candid allowance for the effects of it in others: and that you will proceed with that cautious and tender regard which good men feel when the fate of a fellow-creature is depending, and which will insure satisfaction to your minds, when words cannot be recalled, and when the power of prejudice is no more.'

This remarkable address, as the *Morning Chronicle* [5] reminded its readers two days later, was delivered

extempore and was 'much admired by every person present: indeed, the like has not been heard since he was tried last'. Baron Eyre, in his summing up, paid Barrington the compliment of making special reference to his defence. After reminding the jury that the evidence against the prisoner was in its nature circumstantial, and that these circumstances established a probability that Barrington did take the watch, he went on: 'The prisoner has made a defence, which nobody could hear without lamenting that a man possessed of such talents should have the misfortune to stand accused of a crime of this nature, or to have a character in any degree blemished, that should prevent such talents from being exerted to his own advantage, and the advantage of the public; for certainly those talents might have placed him in a very different situation indeed from that in which he stands now. It might have entitled him to the respect and regard of the public, instead of being a person accused of an offence of this nature. What impression that defence will make is quite another consideration. The ability is one thing, and the application of it, to answer this charge, another thing.' Analysing what Barrington had said, the Judge made it clear that, from his own admission, the watch had fallen to the ground in suspicious proximity to his person: and the jury might judge whether his holding out his hand in the curious way he did, might not make his guilt more probable. 'As to the rest of the defence,' he went on, 'it seems to be an application to your humanity. You will

undoubtedly feel yourselves disposed to a wish that a man who could make such a speech to you, was innocent of this and every other crime; but with those wishes about you, you will still examine the evidence with a proper attention and due investigation of the circumstances of the charge.' The Judge suggested that the jury might find that these circumstances, 'though justifying a general suspicion against him, are not sufficient to convince you that he was the person concerned in stealing the watch. If you do acquit him,' he concluded, 'I hope that a man possessed of such talents as he is possessed of, and having, as he says, friends which may assist him, and by which those talents may be made of advantage: that he will turn them to that advantage, and will make a good use of them; and that this will be the last time that we shall see him in this place.' The jury, after a few minutes' deliberation, found Barrington 'Not guilty'.

Was there ever, in the annals of British justice, a more curious case than this? In reading through the report, one receives the impression that judge, jury and prisoner were all perfectly aware of the prisoner's guilt: but that the former were determined, under the spell of his personality, to take a lenient view, and to give Barrington one more chance to reform. Alas! the adjurations of the impartial and humane judge were wasted, for Baron Eyre himself was to have Barrington once again before him, and was to deliver the sentence which at last proved the turning-point in the pickpocket's strange career. Yet it was not the pickpocket alone that was to blame. The

lenient judge and the acquitting jury, too, cannot divest themselves of their share of the responsibility for a social order which gave a man like Barrington no real chance of honest employment, even if he sought it. When Baron Eyre had finished his speech, that most unusual of events occurred. The prisoner replied to his judge, humbly and respectfully, but firmly. 'My Lord,' said Barrington, 'I have paid great attention to what you have been stating to me, after my acquittal. I return my sincere thanks to the jury for their goodness, but, your Lordship says, you lament very much that a man of my abilities should not turn my abilities to a better use. Now, my Lord, I have only this reply to make—I am ready to go into any service, to work for my living, if your Lordship will but find me a master.'[6] Here was the crux of the matter. London was full of thieves, criminals and prostitutes, because she was unable either to control or to employ these social supernumeraries. What was the judge's answer to Barrington's plea? 'Gaoler, take the prisoner away.' A confession of despair.

After the Bagshaw case Barrington retired into obscurity for nearly two years, during which he did not appear in the law courts. He may have been seriously trying to follow Baron Eyre's advice; or, on the other hand, he may have been merely lucky in the exercise of his profession. At some time during this period he married a wife, whose name has not come down to us, and she bore him a child. They are mere pitiful shadows hovering in the wings during the final stages of the tragedy.

Alderman Paul Havilard le Mesurier was one of the best known of the City Fathers: he had been Alderman of Dowgate Ward since 1784, Sheriff in 1786, and M.P. for Southwark since 1784. On the Queen's birthday, January 19, 1787, he took a party of friends to Drury Lane Playhouse to see a performance of Sheridan's *School for Scandal*.[7] When getting into his carriage to go to the theatre, one of his lady companions noticed that he took out a purse full of money, and warned him that he was very unwise to carry so large a sum about with him, as well as a valuable gold watch. She suggested that he should give his purse to her maid to take care of during the performance. But the worthy Alderman made light of the matter, saying that he had never been robbed in his life. Nevertheless, the warning put him on his guard, not merely to preserve his property, but also to avoid the ridicule which would follow his being robbed. At the end of the play he got up from his seat and went out to find his servants: and when he emerged into the lobby of the theatre, which was as usual thronged with people, he took the precaution of settling his watch-chain deep into his fob, and putting his left hand over his breeches-pocket, where he kept his purse, to guard it. The purse, which was made of striped silk, contained twenty-three and a half guineas.

Now as the Alderman pressed along through the crowd, he felt the purse move in his pocket, though the pocket was buttoned up. At once he clapped his right hand over the outside of the pocket, and swing-

ing round with his left caught a hand which he took to belong to a pickpocket standing close behind him. So far the Alderman had not spoken, being intent on recovering his purse; but as his prisoner remonstrated with him and called out, 'What do you mean? I am a gentleman,' he was pleased to receive support from a clergyman named Adeane, who stepped up to him exclaiming, 'Sir, you are right. I saw him do it.' Nevertheless no purse was found in the prisoner's hand; instead, another gentleman who was standing on the Alderman's other side came forward saying, 'Sir, here is your purse,' and delivered it to him.

The affair was puzzling.[8] The Alderman still had hold of his prisoner's wrist, and felt certain of his guilt. But the latter, who looked extremely pale and confused, kept saying 'Consider, sir, what you are doing. I am a gentleman. Only consider the consequence of this! For God's sake, consider!' Yet the prisoner refused to give his name, and when the attendant constable of the theatre, whose name was Blandy, was called, he declared, after looking hard at him, 'No, I do not know the prisoner.' In the meantime the Alderman examined his pocket; he found that a small slit, about two inches long, had been made by some instrument in the lining, and through this the purse had been abstracted.

By this time the crowd around the Alderman had grown thicker than ever, and a number of gentlemen joined the throng, including Lord Malden, General St. John, and the riotous Major George Hanger, best

known to fame for his championship of polygamy as an antidote to prostitution.[9] Now it began to be whispered among them that the thief was none other than the notorious George Barrington: but no one knew him well enough to be quite sure. They were still discussing the question whether or not they should carry the prisoner before Sir Sampson Wright at Bow Street, when someone exclaimed: 'Here is Townsend of Bow Street! He perhaps knows something of the prisoner. Let us hear what *he* says.' John Townsend, the Bow Street Runner, was then just in the prime of his career. He had begun life as a costermonger, and had formed the habit of attending the trials at the Old Bailey, and noting down in a book the names of the prisoners as they were acquitted or found guilty, together with details of their offences and sentences. By this means he gradually gained a reputation as a kind of oracle or directory of criminals, with the nickname of 'Counsellor Doublehead'. So in due course he was appointed police-officer by the Bow Street magistrates, and made his way to the top of his profession by a combination of effrontery, cunning, and low wit. Major Hanger, who knew him well, described him as 'an adept in the art of fishing a ken, trapping a scamp, or hobbing a knuckle'.[10] In personal appearance he was 'a very smart little man, clean as paint', generally wearing 'a light and loud suit, knee-breeches and short gaiters, and a white hat of great breadth of brim'.[11]

Townsend knew the prisoner well enough by sight,

and he confirmed the suspicions of the bystanders: it *was* Barrington, the pickpocket. Thereupon the Alderman and his friends, with the Constable Blandy, conducted him to a public-house in Bow Street, the 'Brown Bear', where suspects were often kept under arrest till a magistrate could be found. For the greater security of Barrington's person, he was locked up in a back apartment of the inn; and the Alderman then went home to bed, undertaking to attend and prosecute at Bow Street on the following morning.

But next morning there was no Barrington to be seen. He had either bribed or eluded the constables in charge of him, and had slipped away during the night. Constable Blandy was old and infirm, and may possibly, as Barrington afterwards maintained, have had no hand in the escape. But inevitably he was in due course brought to trial for aiding and abetting his prisoner, was convicted and sentenced to some severe penalty. As for Barrington, by escaping when under arrest, he had put himself in a dangerous position legally. His prosecutor had no difficulty in getting a sentence of outlawry pronounced upon him in the King's Bench, which meant that if he were ever caught and identified, he could be sentenced to death automatically, without further trial.

Barrington, it need hardly be said, had left London altogether; and for the next eighteen months he roved about the country, assuming a variety of disguises and making his living hand to mouth as he went about.[12] He repaired first of all to Edinburgh, but there as before, he was recognised and had to

flee the city precipitately to avoid being taken. He then went to Glasgow; and here for the second time in his life he tried his hand at play-acting, joining a company of comedians, and playing with great success a part in 'The Beggar's Opera'—perhaps, we may venture to guess, the appropriate part of Filch. But this occupation did not last long. Barrington was unable to keep his fingers from picking and stealing, even in the dressing-room of his fellow-actors. Soon he was turned out of the company; but he took with him a young lady who had been playing the part of Juliet in Shakespeare, and who offered to share his fortunes. How long this liaison lasted we do not know.

After leaving Glasgow, Barrington passed on his way back again through Edinburgh. He attended the races at Leith and 'unmolestedly picked the pocket of Mr. Campbell of a gold watch and twenty guineas' before hurrying on southwards. He was next heard of at Carlisle, where he was lucky enough to run across an old acquaintance of his named Jack Brown, who kept an E.O.* table. The two rascals formed a temporary partnership, and attended Carlisle races together. Encouraged by their success here, they proceeded on to Derby races, where they started a gambling-saloon for the accommodation of 'gentlemen sportsmen'. But here they nearly met with disaster. One of their clients had won £70 off them—much to their disgust—and Barrington followed him downstairs at his departure, in order

* A variation of roulette, played with a circular table divided into compartments marked 'E' and 'O'.

to relieve him secretly of his booty. The victim straightway missed his cash, and caught hold of the thief by the coat; but Barrington extricated himself and slipped away, leaving only the coat in his possession. In the meantime, confusion and uproar prevailed in the gambling-room: and while everyone's attention was directed to the recovery of the missing £70, Brown fixed his eyes on the money which remained on the table, and contriving 'accidentally' to put out all the lights, swept the board of all the stakes and transferred them to his own pocket. The two thieves then vanished into the darkness, leaving their exasperated dupes to smash the E.O. table for revenge.

Barrington's next exploit was at York, where he attended a concert and came away with several watches and about eighty guineas in money. For some months he moved about in Yorkshire, pretending to be a travelling salesman belonging to some firm in Birmingham or Manchester—a rôle for which his 'decent appearance and grave deportment' perfectly qualified him. In Lincolnshire, however, he met a man who recognised him, and so, taking fright, he hurried northwards again to Newcastle-on-Tyne. In this town he was attending the local theatre one evening, when a gentleman in the boxes missed his watch. Barrington, 'though having every appearance of the man of quality', was suspected and arrested. But, as usual, he contrived on the way to his place of confinement to drop the watch in the street, where it was found next morning

Once more, it was difficult to reach clear proof against him; he pretended to be a travelling dentist, born in North Wales;[13] and the judge before whom he was being examined was about to order his discharge, when a Mr. Burton of Oxford Street, London, chanced to enter the Court. Unhappily for Barrington, Burton knew who he was, and gave information of the robbery of Alderman le Mesurier and the subsequent outlawry.

Barrington was remanded under arrest, while news of his capture was at once sent to Bow Street Office. The information reached London on July 1, 1788, and was thought to be of such importance, that Townsend himself, with an assistant, was sent north, armed with a writ of habeas corpus issued by the Court of King's Bench, to remove Barrington to its own jurisdiction. The two remarkable characters travelled down south together, and Townsend has left us a fragmentary record of one of the conversations which he had with Barrington on the way.[14] Their talk turned on the occasion of Barrington's last acquittal, at which Townsend had been present in court. Barrington felt very bitter about Baron Eyre's adjuration to him to lead a new and more honest life. 'Now, Townsend,' he said, 'you heard what the Chief Baron said to me—a fine flowery speech, was it not?' 'Yes.' 'But he did not answer the question I put to him: "Now, my Lord, I have only this reply to make—I am ready to go into any service, to work for my living, if your Lordship will but find me a master." Why, what was the reply to that? "Gaoler, take the prisoner away!"' And

Townsend admitted that Barrington had reached the heart of the matter. For, he adds, who *would* employ him? That was the point. 'It is really farcical with me sometimes, when I have heard magistrates say, "Young man, really I am very sorry for you; you are much to be pitied. You should turn your talents to a better account; and you should really leave off this bad course of life." Yes, that is better said than done—for where is there anybody to take these wretches?'

The plight of Barrington was indeed now very bad. Though at Newcastle, we are told, he had been visited by a vast concourse of curious visitors of all ranks, and had 'kept an elegant table, composed of every delicacy in the season',[15] he arrived in London on July 25 poor, emaciated, and dejected.[16] He was committed to Newgate after a short examination, preparatory to being brought up to receive judgment under his outlawry.[17] Only his fellow-pickpockets now rallied to his support, raised a subscription of 100 guineas for his use, and so enabled him to employ counsel.

His first chance came on September 16 when he was brought up before the Recorder of London. He seized the opportunity to plead against the harshness of a law which would condemn him to death without even a hearing. He professed to have known nothing of his outlawry previous to his return from Newcastle to London, and declared that, had he known of it, he would have anticipated it by coming forward voluntarily to take his trial. 'I am credibly assured that the charge against me . . . is only on

suspicion; and it is very unreasonable to suppose that a person in such circumstances would subject himself to a process so summary and rigorous in its nature as outlawry indisputably is, knowing that such a proceeding was going forwards. Or will the liberal spirit of the laws justify putting a man to death untried and unheard, because he appears to have been negligent?'[18]

Here Barrington pretended to great indignation. 'But I am given to understand that I am to have no trial, if it can be hindered. A sanguinary process, which has lain dormant for ages, is to supply the place of trial by jury; and fiction propagated by newspapers, to fill up vacant corners from dearth of news and advertisements, is to supply the place of facts and proofs of guilt.' It had been suggested that his case was meant as a precedent to the rising generation; but 'the rising generation will have but little cause to thank that reformer, who establishes a precedent to set aside trial by jury, when the charge is theft on suspicion, and certainly free from violence and cruelty'.

Barrington went on to develop his plea of ignorance of the outlawry, and to demand that his counsel should be allowed to inspect the proceedings by which it had been arrived at. In reply to all this, the Recorder pointed out that Barrington had no legal right to indulgence of any sort. Still, his prosecutor had decided to remove the proceedings into the Court of King's Bench, where the original outlawry had been pronounced: and this would give the

defendant an opportunity to move for a writ of error against the proceedings.

After this initial skirmish, we next find the scene shifted to the Court of King's Bench, where Barrington duly made his appearance before Lord Kenyon on November 20, 1788. On this occasion, to quote the *Morning Post*,[19] 'Mr. Barrington's behaviour and address was perfectly consistent with all the former elegance and good-breeding he has shown to his beholders in former public occasions. He wore a drab-coloured *surtout*, white waistcoat, corduroy breeches, and boots. He seemed to be in good health and spirits, though the cells have been his berth for some nights, for beating a fellow-prisoner. His demeanour in Court was perfectly cool and collected: and in coming in and going out, he bowed with great respect to the Court.' In order not to give any point away to his opponent, and in case the worst came to the worst, he refused to admit his identity, and was therefore cited on the record as 'William Jones, alias George Barrington'.[20] Two lawyers, Wood and Fielding, were briefed to defend him, while Alderman le Mesurier was represented —this was probably a tactical mistake on his part— by his own brother, who was a barrister. First of all, the indictment and outlawry proceedings were read out aloud; and then Wood advanced the complaint that his client was handicapped in making his defence, through not being permitted to inspect the proceedings. Wood went on to declare that he had already detected one error in the form of the out-

lawry; and this was, by coincidence, the same as that on the strength of which Lord Mansfield had in 1768 reversed the outlawry pronounced against John Wilkes. The flaw consisted in the statement that the proceedings took place 'at the County Court for the County of Middlesex' instead of 'at the County Court *of Middlesex* for the County of Middlesex'. Londoners had gasped in astonishment when Lord Mansfield by such hair-splitting had saved the Government from making a martyr of their demagogue. Who would have thought that precisely the same technicality would have availed, twenty years later, to enable their foremost pickpocket to wriggle once more through the meshes of the law? On the strength of the Wilkes precedent Wood and Fielding pleaded for time for their client to quash the outlawry by procuring a writ of error.[21] The prosecutor did not oppose their application, provided Barrington for his part abandoned the pretence of not admitting identity. And before remanding Barrington again to Newgate, Lord Kenyon went out of his way to show him the fullest possible indulgence, by ordering the outlawry proceedings to be read over *a second time*, thus giving Wood an opportunity of confirming his note of the technical error.

Barrington's case now looked more promising. He had won a good deal of popular sympathy: outlawry proceedings smacked of arbitrary government, and in any case were out of date. No one liked what the *Morning Post* stigmatised at the time as 'that invidious mode of punishment'.[22] But moving for a writ of error was a business for the lawyers,

and involved all sorts of technicalities and delays, with consultations between Barrington's lawyers and the Crown's law officers, and so forth. And in the meantime Barrington did himself no good, and probably some harm, by bidding too blatantly for publicity for his grievances. He wrote from prison a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* [23] complaining that the published accounts of the recent trial and conviction of Constable Blandy for conniving at his escape from the 'Brown Bear' were calculated to prejudice his own trial. 'Whether the conduct of the unfortunate man, in suffering—as it is said—his prisoner to escape, proceeded from wilful neglect, or from inadvertence, this at least is certain: *he has had a trial.* The case is very different with me: *I have had no trial*, though I have strained every nerve to obtain it; and, until it is obtained, the public should suspend its opinion. It may fairly do more, sir, in supposing me innocent; for what reasonable ground can a prosecutor have to decline bringing a cause before a jury?' This impudent letter was apparently not published; but a remark at its close, that 'the newspapers can never benefit me so much as they have injured me by fiction and misrepresentation,' was neither tactful, nor exactly sensible, from a man who owed so much of the nourishment of his vanity to the press reports of his speeches in court! From henceforth we find that Barrington's 'press notices' were decidedly colder than they used to be.

Throughout the greater part of 1789 Barrington continued confined in Newgate, awaiting the outcome of his lawyers' efforts. In due course they

persuaded the Attorney-General to issue his writ of error; but the prosecutor then vindictively withdrew from the proceedings he had initiated to have judgment pronounced under the outlawry, and thus saddled Barrington with the onus of taking the initiative to complete the proceedings, get the writ enforced, and the outlawry reversed. The expense and delay which this caused bore heavily upon the prisoner, who was kept in confinement in Newgate the whole time.

At last, towards the end of 1789, his efforts were rewarded; and on November 14 he was brought up again to the Court of King's Bench, before the Lord Chief Justice and Justices Buller and Ashurst, to pray for the allowance of the writ of error. After some discussion between the Bench and Barrington's counsel, he was permitted to open the proceedings with a personal statement of his case. On this occasion Barrington was particularly humble and respectful in his manner, intending to make the most of the sufferings he had undergone. 'The reverence I owe to the Court,' he begins, 'a respectable anxiety with regard to the opinion of the world, and personal justice, will not allow me to be totally silent under the charge of contumacy, imputed to me by this process, and for which the forfeiture of my life hath been required, though I was not in intention guilty, however appearances as to fact may have been against me.' [24] He then launched out into a lengthy, but impressive, description of the hardships entailed by the outlawry proceedings. 'It can easily

be conceived that a man may be called by his concerns into a distant part of the kingdom, or out of the kingdom. In his absence a Bill of Indictment is preferred against him—on what grounds can never be fully known till a fair and regular trial has taken place. . . . The prosecutor can then instantly proceed to outlawry, and if the accused should happen to be in a remote part of the country, or beyond the seas, where he may be detained by illness or some other inevitable cause, the process may be pushed through its different stages, and be in force against him, before he knows a syllable of the matter.'

Here Barrington digressed to make one of his usual complaints against the Press. 'If the publishers of the daily prints had been as free in communicating this business, as they have been uniformly profuse of their fictions concerning me, it would have done them no discredit.' But no intimation of the outlawry had been given him, no advertisement of any kind had been published anywhere. 'It is true, I have been informed during my confinement, there is a sort of proclamation issued; but as it is merely local, confined to a particular spot in a particular county, and uttered by an officer, perhaps in a low voice, and in a cursory manner, it is very probable it may not reach the ears of the accused until it is too late, until it is in force against him. Returning to his home and family, he is taken into custody; in vain he protests his innocence, in vain he solicits a trial. He is told in a word, that he is an outlaw; he is cast

into prison, and where is his resource? If he cannot command a considerable sum of money, he must patiently abide in misery and irons, as long as the prosecutor pleases; and at length, when probably the prisoner's body is debilitated, his mind harassed, and his faculties impaired by the complicated wretchedness of a prison, the prosecutor perhaps condescends, in a kind of mercy, to bring him before the Court to demand judgement of death against him.' He himself had admittedly been treated with compassion and indulgence by the Court, without which not all the skill of the best lawyers in the world could have saved his life. But the prosecutor had treated him with great harshness. Instead of waiving the outlawry as soon as the writ of error was granted, or at least bringing him to immediate trial, he had so acted as to prolong his confinement without trial for fifteen months, during which (he added) 'the measure of affliction hath been filled up by domestic concerns of a less public, but not of a less poignant nature. How I have borne it, that Being best knows, without whose permission no sparrow falls to the ground, and who sometimes tries, for His own wise purposes, the extreme strength of His creatures; but surely, I should have sunk under the weight of such accumulated woe, if Patience and Hope had not been my supporters.' Barrington concluded his speech with a graceful tribute of thanks, which was heard with the most profound attention by the Court. 'Give me leave,' he said, 'may it please your Lordships, to declare, with the utmost

respectful submission, that the benignity of the Court, the candour of the Attorney-General, and the able and earnest exertions of the gentlemen in whose hands my defence is placed, have made an ardent and suitable impression on my mind, a powerful impression that will last for ever.'

After a fortnight's adjournment of the proceedings Barrington's lawyers took up the tale where he had left it. The original flaw in the wording of the outlawry proceedings had now been supplemented by the discovery of a mistake in dates, whereby the prisoner had been summoned to give himself up for trial by a date (February 25) four days *later* than that (February 21) on which the actual proclamation of his outlawry had been made. The Court eagerly seized on this second, more material error; without troubling themselves to go further into the difficult Wilkes precedent, they pronounced the outlawry invalid, and restored the prisoner to 'all that he had lost by the outlawry'. Barrington after this triumph 'gracefully bowed to the Court, and was conducted back to Newgate'. He now had to take his trial in the usual way for the original offence against Alderman le Mesurier with which he had been charged two and a half years previously. His case came on before Justice Ashurst at the Old Bailey on December 9.[25] The Court was crowded with spectators, including the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, who had seats on the Bench. Barrington still possessed enough funds to employ one of the most eminent counsels at the Bar, William Garrow, then a

young man in his thirtieth year who had risen to fame five years previously when acting as Counsel for Charles James Fox in the Westminster Scrutiny of 1784. Garrow, though not remarkable for his legal knowledge, was a great debater, and particularly skilful in cross-examining stupid or unwilling witnesses—just what Barrington needed, in fact. He was renowned for his courtesy and kindness of manner; later on he entered Parliament, became Solicitor-General (1812) and was elevated to the Exchequer Bench (1817). On the side of the prosecution the Alderman's brother again acted as counsel, but did not prove himself very expert in the handling of his case. He was pulled up by Garrow for anticipating, in his opening speech, that the prisoner would make 'appeals to your passions', as he had done on previous occasions when he had stood in the dock! The prosecution abandoned at the outset the capital part of the charge, 'stealing privily from the person', and made it a case of simple larceny.

The long lapse of time that had occurred since his arrest was, of course, of great advantage to the prisoner, as it rendered the evidence against him less clear and complete. Alderman le Mesurier first gave his evidence as to the robbery, and a long cross-examination followed, in which Garrow drove him to admit that his suspicions against Barrington had not seemed conclusive at the moment of the theft, and that Barrington's own air of confusion when arrested was as much an indication of innocence as of guilt. But the material gap in the case for the prosecution

was, that they were unable to produce the supporting witness, the Rev. Adeane, who had been absent from England on his estate in the West Indies for nearly two years. In his absence, Garrow was even able to make insinuations against Adeane himself as 'insane and flighty and not of the best principles'—though the only evidence for this appeared to be that he was in the habit of staying in bed till midday every morning!

Barrington then took the opportunity to make a very long speech in his own defence, but the newspapers agreed that it was not up to his usual standard of eloquence. The *Public Advertiser* [26] was of opinion that it was 'by no means delivered with that force and energy in which several of his former speeches have been conceived', while the *Morning Post* [27] even stigmatised it as 'inflated with vanity and marked by audacity'. Barrington spoke again of 'the heavy affliction I have suffered for many months before I could obtain a trial' and of 'the newspaper calumny that has been levelled against me, even under the pressure of a long imprisonment, and to the very hour of my trial'. He asserted that he would never have been arrested originally but for the discovery of his name: this had turned the scale in the mind of the prosecutor, who up to that time had been 'in no way active or like a man that was at all convinced in his own mind'. As for his escape from the 'Brown Bear', that was due to fear. 'I found myself there under a charge that I clearly perceived looked up to something for its support,

beyond facts and circumstances. I had just seen a striking proof what prejudice may be attached to a name, and it was impossible for me to say how far it might not extend.' He then launched out into an audacious vindication of poor Constable Blandy. 'It is impossible for me to forbear most solemnly declaring, in the presence of the Court and the World, that the unhappy man who was convicted for suffering me to escape, was neither wilfully or wittingly consenting thereto. . . . This poor man was a tradesman and a shopkeeper; this took up his attention in the day, and in the evening he attended his duty as a constable: and he was, besides that, an old infirm man, and perhaps in the best of his days he never possessed that keenness of sight which they do who are runners by profession.' (This was a slap at Townsend, who had given evidence against Blandy at his trial.) 'I trust, Gentlemen, that some little attention will be paid to what I say on this occasion. I have now no longer any interest from it, and he—poor man—can bear no part of it. He is freed now from the strife of life, and is not entangled with the perplexities of justice: but it is a tribute due to the memory of an unfortunate man, and I think myself bound to pay it, whatever my own case may be!'

After complaining of the severity shown by the prosecutor in his conduct of the whole affair, Barrington went on: 'Among the vices imputed to me by newspaper report, there are two which I trust neither the accusing spirit, nor the recording angel

need blush or weep at on my account—I mean, cruelty and calumny, which is perhaps the worst of cruelty. For I have ever been more happy to remove than to cast aspersion, and I have never been so tenacious of my life, as not to fear risking it to save a fellow-creature from ruin. This is a consolation which the united efforts of all thé paragraphists that now live, or may live hereafter, cannot deprive me—this is a consolation which has supported me through life, and which I trust will attend me to that bourn from whence no traveller returns.' Finally he concludes: 'The question is not now what the private opinion of individuals concerning George Barrington may be, but whether there is or is not that full, clear and unequivocal evidence which the wisdom of ages has established as the criterion of jurors to decide by, and which ought never to be departed from, in any man's case whatever. To strain a point to acquit, may proceed from Godlike motives; and perhaps men of the most vindictive tempers must respect in others the benevolent impulse: but to strain a point to condemn, is repugnant to justice, to conscience, and to humanity.'

Naturally, Justice Ashurst, in his summing-up, defended the prosecution against the prisoner's charge of cruelty in pressing the outlawry proceedings. He then pointed out that the evidence against Barrington rested entirely on Alderman le Mesurier's own story, but none the less seemed 'to apply very hard against the prisoner'. The jury must put out of their minds any prejudice against the

prisoner on account of his reputation; but equally they must remember that 'crimes of this kind are generally done in such a manner, as to make it more difficult to detect than most other crimes. Therefore a reasonable certainty is everything you can have in cases of this kind.'

On the whole, the summing-up was against Barrington; nevertheless the jury, after a very short consultation, gave a verdict 'Not Guilty, and did not fly for it.' In other words, they either believed Barrington's account of the whole affair, or they wished to express their sympathy with him over the outlawry proceedings. Thus the long-drawn-out struggle had ended in his favour; and he had escaped, mainly by his own personal exertions and charm, from a situation which nine-tenths of his contemporaries would have found hopeless from the outset. All things considered, this le Mesurier case must rank as the outstanding triumph of Barrington's peculiar genius.

CHAPTER VI

'POSITIVELY THE LAST APPEARANCE'
(1789–1790)

PROBABLY vanity was the most powerful motive behind Barrington's persistence in sticking to his profession so long after his notoriety had turned the odds against him and rendered small his chances of long escaping in London. If so, this vanity was surely sated to the full by the long-drawn-out process of Alderman le Mesurier, with its repeated scenes in court and accompanying press publicity. Even after his acquittal, the newspapers could not let him alone. In particular, the *Morning Post*, which was now for some reason very hostile to him, pursued him with vindictive sneers and gibes for a fortnight after the trial. Immediately Barrington was set free he had quitted London, taking with him his wife and child, and had gone down into Hampshire.[1] Report declared that an aunt of his had died about a month previously, and had left him a small landed property in that county, of which he intended to take possession. This sounds unlikely, but the rumour at any rate provided the press with 'copy'. 'Thus placed above want,' observed the *London Chronicle*, 'there can be no excuse for further risks in his former

profession.' And the *Morning Post* made merry at the expense of Barrington the freeholder, as representing 'an additional vote to the *yellow-capes*'.[2] Then it occurred to the enterprising paragraphist that Barrington, by the acquisition of this little property, had become a near neighbour of the great Governor-General of India, Warren Hastings, who was temporarily living near Old Windsor and whose impeachment was still proceeding before the House of Lords. This proved a new stream of suggestion and innuendo. 'Barrington', we read on December 18, 'has made application to Mr. Hastings for his recommendation to some appointment in India. Barrington alledges, in excuse for taking so great a liberty, that he shall not be long an intruder upon persons there to whom Mr. Hastings may wish well. For, says this ingenious ornament of the *freebooting* fraternity, Englishmen in general are converted into *pickpockets* after they get into the East: but I shall go ready made, and therefore make shorter work of it.'[3] Whether there was the slightest grain of truth in these scandalous remarks, we have no means of knowing; but a little later the *Morning Post* implies that the application was a failure. 'Major Scott' (Warren Hastings' chief adviser and factotum) 'has taken no part in promoting the suit of Barrington to his needy principal, Mr. Hastings. The Major alleges that India is already too deplorably harassed by the *pillage* of former *pickpockets*.'

A last parting gibe of the *Post* on Christmas Eve was more amusing than its predecessors. Perhaps it

was inspired by the thought that Barrington's escape from his outlawry was due in part to the Wilkes precedent; anyhow, it was almost good enough to have come from Wilkes' own mouth. 'Barrington's ill-success in attempting the pocket of Mr. Wilkes, is easily accounted for: the thief made his attempt on the worthy Alderman the day he was reconciled at St. James's and *turned his coat*.' [4]

But Barrington did not stay long in his 'pleasant little box' in Hampshire, nor did his property prove adequate to his support. At the beginning of 1790 he set off on his travels for the last time, and crossed again to Ireland. He took with him a new partner named Hubert, a young man who had previously created a sensation by defrauding of a large sum of money the King's profligate younger son, Frederick Duke of York, who had returned from Hanover to England in 1788 only to distinguish himself by debauchery and extravagance.[5] With Hubert's help Barrington began to carry on his depredations in Dublin; he took the precaution to make Hubert undertake the actual thefts, whilst he stood by as accomplice to receive the booty. But Dublin always proved unlucky for Barrington: it was, as his biographer says, never his fortune to remain there for any length of time undetected. So, in a short while, Hubert was taken in the very act of picking a gentleman's pocket and handing the property to Barrington: he was tried and sentenced to seven years' transportation, but afterwards contrived to make his escape from prison. Barrington, on the other hand,

evaded capture on this occasion, but at once left Dublin, and crossed over back to England. But he was reluctant to return to London, and therefore rambled about in the provinces during the summer, principally engaged in professional visits to race-courses. We learn that at the beginning of August he was about to go north to Doncaster, when some unexpected occurrence made him change his mind;[6] and at length, a month later, the London newspapers had 'the noted Mr. Barrington' in their columns again.

Henry Hare Townsend, of Downhills, Tottenham, and two other residences in Surrey and Norfolk, was a very wealthy man, chiefly known to us as the father of the minor poet, Chauncey Hare Townsend. He was fond of horse-racing, and ran his own horses. On the afternoon of September 1, he drove in a phaeton over to Enfield Marsh, where races were to be run, and after alighting walked about the ground to see how his horses were doing.[7] Soon after three o'clock one of his horses won a heat, and he left the stand from which he had been watching the race, ran across the course, and took his horse by the bridle to lead him to the weighing-post. While he was making his way through the throng which surrounded the horses, a tall thin man dressed in a light-coloured coat gave him a slight push, and then a little later came up a second time and tried to pass between him and the horse which he was leading. Townsend resented this rudeness and glared hard at the intruder, who for his part appeared 'as if he did

not know what he was looking at, as if he was looking at the scales'. It struck Townsend, as he asked him with an oath where he was coming to, that the man had a wild look in his eyes, as though he was searching for something unknown.

About a quarter of an hour afterwards the clerk of the course told Townsend that somebody wanted particularly to speak to him. This person, William Blades, said that he had noticed a man, whom he had thought to be Barrington, following Townsend closely about on the course: but as the two were so close together, he was not sure that he might not have mistaken some personal friend of Townsend's for Barrington. As soon as Blades mentioned the name of Barrington, Townsend felt in his waistcoat pocket, where he had been carrying his valuable gold stop-watch (£20) and chain, three seals, and a key, in order to avoid dirtying a new pair of leather breeches which he was wearing. All these articles were gone! At once Townsend begged Blades to walk up and down the course and show him the man who had been following him about, whom he identified in his own mind with the tall thin man in light clothes. Blades then left Townsend to go in search of the suspect; and while he was away, Thomas Kempton came up and inquired whether Townsend had had his pocket picked. At first the latter denied this, as he wanted to keep the matter quiet; but as it soon appeared that a rumour of what had happened was spreading all over the course, he admitted the loss, whereupon Kempton told him

that Barrington had gone to the starting-post to watch the next race.

The horses were just about to start when Townsend, rejoined by Blades, reached the starting-post: they saw Barrington in the distance and recognised him, but did not dare to cross the course until the horses had passed. They waited till Barrington's back was turned, and he was walking to the weighing-post. Then Townsend ran up to him as fast as he could, collared him with both hands, and cried, 'You rascal, you have robbed me! Your name is Barrington. Damme, sir, you have robbed me of my watch!' 'You are right, sir, as to my name,' replied Barrington, 'but I have not your watch.' In spite of this denial, Blades and Kempton also laid hold of Barrington, the latter holding him by the collar and by one arm. Barrington made no resistance, but nodded to an acquaintance of his who was standing by, and called out to him to come along too. They all marched together in the direction of the stand: but when they had got halfway, Barrington's acquaintance—or confederate—said to Townsend: 'Don't trouble yourself with that fellow, but let me take him.' The other naturally took this as an intention of rescue, and called out to his friends, 'Don't let that fellow walk there any longer'—whereupon someone knocked the interloper down, and he was not seen again. As they approached the stand, they met Townsend's coachman, a strong fellow named Walduck, who also took Barrington by the collar and, suspecting that he might be carrying some-

thing in his hand, seized his fist and held it open.

A great crowd of people had by this time gathered round the door of the stand, and a disagreeable scene ensued. A little man attacked Barrington with a stick, and struck him once or twice on the head. At this Townsend intervened, not liking to see a man beaten both of whose hands were confined. He threatened to knock the assailant down unless he desisted; and finally, somehow or other, they got Barrington hustled into the stand and left him in charge of the coachman and another horse-owner, a young man named Buxton Kendrick. There was no one else left in this portion of the stand; but in the other half, separated only by a partition about breast-high, were several ladies who were interested spectators of the scene. Suddenly Kendrick heard a jingling noise; and Walduck averred that he actually saw something drop to the ground between their prisoner and a carpet that was nailed up against the back of the stand. This was the missing watch. Barrington attempted to kick it along the ground; but he was anticipated by Kendrick, who picked it up and, after identification, gave it into the safe keeping of Lady Lake, a relation of Townsend's.

Barrington was next carried to the Angel Inn at Edmonton, where he was examined; there were found on him twenty-two and a half guineas, a silk purse, a snuff-box and a metal watch. After this he was committed by a Justice of the Peace named

Hubbald to the New Prison, Clerkenwell, to await trial.[8] A fortnight later, on Wednesday, September 15, he appeared at the Old Bailey Sessions charged with the theft. His prosecutor made no attempt to gain a conviction on the capital charge of stealing 'privily from the person', but merely charged him with the simple felony, the sentence for which was transportation. Once again Barrington engaged Garrow to defend him, but this time the latter's cross-examining abilities had small scope.

On the first day of his trial Barrington indulged in his usual preliminary skirmishing. He complained to the Court that his property had been taken from him at the time of his arrest, and detained ever since, 'by which detention, my Lord, I have been hindered from taking those proper measures for my defence and from obtaining that legal assistance, which my unfortunate situation peculiarly requires'. After ascertaining that Townsend was not complaining of having lost any money, and that no one had claimed what was found on Barrington, the Recorder ordered his twenty guineas to be restored to him. 'Thus he has obtained, or rather renovated,' commented the *London Chronicle*, 'a sort of Magna Carta for the property which is not claimed and sworn to by some individual who prosecutes.'[9] Barrington counted them over carefully, and thanked the Judge, before pleading 'Not Guilty'. He next challenged one of the Jury, a coachmaker; and this challenge being accepted, his trial was held over for two days, till the Friday.

This delay ensured a large audience for Barrington's last trial. 'The Court' said the *London Chronicle* 'was more crowded than it had been for many years.' The newspapers had indeed for some days past been doing their best to work up public interest in the trial by publishing anecdotes and rumours about Barrington, mostly of a derogatory nature. Thus the *St. James's Chronicle* on September 7 announced that 'the pickpockets, we hear, no longer acknowledge any subordination to their former superior, Barrington. They consider him as a *bungler* in the operative part of the profession, by his being so often detected; whereas many others, employed an equal number of years in *active service*, have never yet been taken.' And the *Public Advertiser* (September 17) published, as a skit, the report of a mock debate on Barrington, supposed to have taken place at the 'Ways and Means Club' between a highwayman, housebreaker, pickpocket, sky-farmer, shoplifter, fence, swindler, etc.

The judge before whom the case was tried was Baron (now Chief Baron) Eyre, the very judge who had tried the Bagshaw case, and had adjured Barrington after his acquittal to take warning and reform. Baron Eyre, however, was humane and impartial; he gave no signs until after the verdict that he had ever seen Barrington before, and was scrupulous in his handling of the evidence, and in giving the prisoner every possible latitude. But from the beginning, it was seen that everything pointed to a conviction. First Henry Townsend gave his evidence,

swearing positively that the man in the light-coloured coat was Barrington, and identifying the watch which was found in the stand. Mr. Garrow tried to shake him in cross-examination, to admit that the pushes he had received while leading his horse were nothing exceptional; but gained nothing material in his client's favour out of this.

Then came Buxton Kendrick, who heard the watch fall in the stand—between Barrington's legs, he stated—and afterwards picked it up. He was positive as to the identity of the watch. Walduck the coachman, who swore he actually saw the watch fall, was the next witness. Garrow tried to make him admit that he had given evidence inconsistent with this at the earlier hearing before Hubbald, but without success. Kempton and Blades then told how they had suspected and helped to arrest Barrington. And lastly, the prosecution produced an entirely new witness, Mary Danby, one of the ladies who were in the adjoining stand when Barrington was brought in by Walduck. She declared that she had seen Barrington drop the watch from his hand, thus supplying the one link missing in the chain of circumstantial evidence. Garrow did his best to discredit this witness in cross-examination by making her admit that she had come to the races in the chaise of one unknown gentleman and had been taken home in the chaise of another. But the prosecutor himself came forward to try to clear up this mystery by explaining that Mary Danby's father-in-law was a respectable farmer living in his own

neighbourhood, who had entrusted her to an elderly friend named Chase to take on this excursion. The Court evidently considered this story a little ingenuous, for it pronounced that the witness 'certainly appeared to have gone to the races in a way that did not appear proper'. But the prosecution was strong enough, even without Mary Danby's witness.

Now it was Barrington's turn to make his defence. He was dressed 'genteelly in light-coloured cloaths', and spoke for about twenty-five minutes 'in a most elegant and able speech' [10]—all the more able inasmuch as most of it was bluff and sentiment, and very little of it had material relevance to the charge against him. 'The situation of every person', he began, 'who has the misfortune to stand here, is extremely distressing and awkward. Mine is so in a peculiar degree: if I am totally silent, it may be considered perhaps as a proof of guilt; and if I presume to offer those arguments which present themselves to my mind in my defence, they may not perhaps be favoured with that attention which they might deserve. Yet I by no means distrust the candour and benevolence of the jury; and therefore I will beg leave to proceed to state the circumstances of the case as they occur to me, not doubting but they will meet with some degree of credit, notwithstanding the unhappy situation I am in. Gentlemen, I was on the race-ground at Enfield, observing the race, on the day that the indictment mentions, where I found myself surrounded by Mr. Townsend and numbers of others. Mr. Townsend said: "Your

name is Barrington, and you have taken my watch!" I told him he was right as to my name, but he accused me unjustly; however, I would go anywhere with him.

'I was removed from thence to a stand, from whence the races were viewed. It consisted of two booths, and they were separated from each other with only a railing elbow-high; and it is a great misfortune to me, Gentlemen of the Jury, that you were not able to observe the situation of those booths. For if you had, you would have found it nearly impossible that some circumstances which have come from the witnesses could be true. I was close to the railings that separated the two booths, and some person said, "Here is the watch!" This watch Mr. Townsend claimed, and said it was his. I was removed from thence to "The Angel" at Edmonton, where the examination took place. And I am very sorry to be under the necessity of observing, that a very material difference has taken place in the depositions delivered that day before the magistrate in various respects. A witness—the coachman—positively declared that he did not see this watch in my hand, that he did not see me take it from my pocket, that he did not see it drop from the person, but that he saw it on the ground: and he might have gone so far as to say he saw it fall. I took the liberty of asking him one question: Whether he had seen this watch in my hand, whether he had seen it fall from me? He declared he did not. I then asked him, whether he could take upon himself to swear, from

the situation he stood in at the adjoining booth, that this watch might not have dropped from some other person? He declared he could not observe any such thing. Gentlemen, with respect to the evidence of Mr. Kendrick, he made the same declaration then.

'Mr. Townsend has brought me here under the charge of having committed felony. He has told you, Gentlemen of the Jury, that he lost a watch out of his pocket, and that pocket is a waistcoat-pocket; that he was in a very extraordinary situation; that he was on the race-ground, where certainly the greatest decorum is not always observed. And he was also in a situation which exposed him more to the pressure he complained of than any other person; for instead of his horse being in the possession of his jockey or groom, he attended it himself. And I must beg leave to observe, Gentlemen of the Jury, that it is a custom where people bet money at races, to wish to see the horse immediately after the heat is over; so that the pressure which Mr. Townsend had, or what he thought he had from me, could not appear very extraordinary—and I am under the necessity of saying, his fancy has been rather improved by the occasion. With respect, Gentlemen, to the last witness that has appeared, I will not say anything on the occasion; that will rest entirely with you. It was a circumstance, however, of a most extraordinary nature, that this person should never come forward till the present moment; and whether the contradictions and strange accounts she has

given of herself are such as to entitle her to any credit, particularly in a situation where the life or liberty of another is at stake, is not for me to observe upon. Gentlemen of the Jury, it may perhaps be expected, by many persons in this place, that I should say a great deal about prepossession and newspaper reports; and if I had the ability to do it, perhaps I should not be blamed; for he who has been the unhappy object of much defamation, has surely a right to deprecate its baneful effects: where much pains have been taken to defame, some pains may be surely allowed to abate that defamation. Gentlemen, that it has been the hard lot of some unhappy persons, to have been convicted of crimes they did really not commit, less through evidence than ill-natured report, is, doubtless, certain; and doubtless there are many respectable persons, now in Court, fully convinced of the truth of that observation. Such times, it is to be hoped, are passed. I dread not such a conviction in my own person; I am well convinced of the noble nature of a British Court of Justice; the dignified and benign principles of its Judges, and the liberal and candid spirit of its Jurors.

'Gentlemen, life is the gift of God, and liberty its greatest blessing; the power of disposing of both, or either, is the greatest man can enjoy. It is also adventitious that, great as that power is, it cannot be better placed than in the hands of an English jury; for they will not exercise it like tyrants, who delight in blood, but like generous and grave men, who delight to spare rather than destroy; and who, not

forgetting they are men themselves, lean, when they can, to the side of compassion. It may be thought, Gentlemen of the Jury, that I am applying to your passions; and if I had the power to do it, I would not fail to employ it. The passions animate the heart; and to the passions we are indebted for the noblest actions; and to the passions we owe our dearest and finest feelings; and when it is considered the mighty power you now possess, whatever leads to a cautious and tender discharge of it must be thought of great consequence: as long as the passions conduct us on the side of benevolence, they are our best, our safest, and our most friendly guides. Gentlemen of the Jury, Mr. Townsend has deposed that he lost this watch, but how, I trust, is by no means clear. I trust, Gentlemen, you will consider the great, the almost impossibility, that having had the watch in my possession for so long a time, time sufficient to have concealed it in a variety of places, to have conveyed it to town, it should still be in my possession. You have heard from Mr. Townsend, that here was an interval of at least half an hour between the time of losing the watch and my being taken into custody: there is something, Gentlemen, impossible in the circumstance. And, on the other hand, it has sometimes happened that remorse, a generous remorse, has struck the minds of persons in such a manner, as to have induced them to surrender themselves into the hands of justice, rather than an innocent person should suffer. It is not therefore, I suppose, improbable, that if Mr. Townsend lost his watch by

an act of felony, the person who had the watch in his possession, feeling for the situation of an unhappy man, might be induced to place that watch on the ground. But it is by no means certain how Mr. Townsend lost his watch, whether by an act of felony, or whether by accident; it might have fallen into the hands of some other person, and that person, feeling for my unhappy situation, might have been induced to restore it. I humbly hope, that the circumstances of the case are such as may induce a scrupulous jury to make a favourable decision; and I am very well convinced that you will not be led by any other circumstances than those of the present case, either from reports of former misfortunes, or by fear of my falling into similar ones. I am now just thirty-two years of age, (shall be so next month); it is nearly half the life of man; it is not worth while being impatient to provide for the other half, so far as to do anything unworthy. Gentlemen, in the course of my life I have suffered much distress, I have felt something of the vicissitudes of fortune, and now from observation I am convinced, upon the whole, there is no joy but what arises from the practice of virtue, and consists in the felicity of a tranquil mind, and a benevolent heart—sources of consolation which the most prosperous circumstances do not always furnish, and which may be felt under the most indigent. It will be my study, Gentlemen, to possess them; nor will the heaviest affliction of poverty, pain, or disgrace, cause me to part with resolutions founded on the deepest reflection and which

will end but with life: I will perish on the pavement before I will deviate from them. For my own part, whatever your verdict may be, I trust I shall be enabled to meet it with a firmness of mind. He, indeed, has little to fear from death, whose fame is tarnished, and who has endured the ceaseless abuse of unfeeling minds. When Heaven accepts contrition, it receives into favour when it pardons; but man, more cruel than his Maker, pursues his offending brother with unrelenting severity, and marks a deviation from rectitude with a never-dying infamy, and with unceasing suspicion and reproach, which seem to exclude him from the pale of virtue. Gentlemen of the Jury, the thought of death may appal the rich and prosperous; but, on the other hand, the unfortunate cannot have much to fear from it; yet the tenderness of nature cannot be quite subdued by the utmost degree of human resolution, and I cannot be insensible to the woes which must be felt by an affectionate companion and an infant offspring; and there is besides a principle in human nature, stronger even than the fear of death, and which can hardly fail to operate some time or other in life—I mean the desire of good fame. Under that laudable influence, Gentlemen, if I am acquitted, I will quickly retire to some distant land, where my name and misfortunes will be alike unknown; where harmless manners shall shield me from the imputation of guilt, and where prejudice will not be liable to misrepresentation; and I do now assure you, Gentlemen of the Jury, that I feel a cheering hope,

even at this awful moment, that the rest of my life will be so conducted, as to make me as much an object of esteem and applause, as I am now the unhappy object of censure and suspicion.'

This speech was certainly one of Barrington's most eloquent utterances; yet there is a tone of melancholy fatalism about it, which implies that he hardly expected it to achieve his acquittal. His closing words almost suggest that he was tired of the game he had played so long, and did not much care after all whether the verdict was given for or against him. With a kind of presentiment of his fate, his mind seemed to be turning already towards the prospect of a new start in a distant land: perhaps he anticipated already the sentence of transportation.

As no witnesses were called for the defence, Baron Eyre then proceeded to sum up. He analysed the case presented by the prosecution, showing how it led, step by step, to point to the prisoner's guilt. Mr. Townsend had lost his watch. Barrington had been seen close to Townsend, and had pushed him. The watch had been found in Barrington's custody: and there was some evidence of his having dropped it out of his possession. The prisoner, in his defence, had made 'all the observations that I think could be made on his part in his favour', but these observations must be given no more weight than they deserved. The Jury must weigh the circumstantial evidence and decide if it was conclusive.

Without hesitation the Jury found Barrington guilty. Thereupon the Chief Baron addressed the

prisoner, harking back to the previous occasion on which he had tried him: 'Mr. Barrington, hitherto I have conducted myself toward you on this trial as if I had never seen you before. But now, when nothing which I can say can prejudice the Jury, I must say that you have been treated with much more favour than you deserve. This ought to have been a capital indictment, and it ought to havé reached your life—and public justice very much calls for such a sacrifice—for if ever there was a man in the world that abused and prostituted great talents to the most unworthy and shameful purposes, you are that man. And you have done it against all warning, against the example of your own case, and of a thousand other cases that have occurred. And I am afraid that now, as the punishment does not reach your life, I cannot entertain the least hope that you will in any manner reform: but that the end of it will be that you must be a shameful spectacle at your latter end.'

A few days after this scene, at the close of the Old Bailey Sessions, Barrington appeared at the Bar for the last time, to receive his sentence. After the Recorder had pronounced that he was to be 'transported for the term of seven years to parts beyond the seas', Barrington was allowed to make a few final valedictory remarks to the Court. 'I cannot help observing', he said, 'that it is the strange lot of some persons through life, that with the best wishes, the best endeavours, and the best intentions, they are not able to escape the envenomed tooth of calumny.

Whatever they say or do is so twisted and perverted from the reality, that they will meet with censure and misfortune, where perhaps they were entitled to success and praise. The world, my Lord, has given me credit for much more abilities than I am conscious of possessing; but the world should also consider that the greatest abilities may be so obstructed by the mercenary nature of some unfeeling minds, as to render them entirely useless to their possessor. Where was the generous and powerful man that would come forward and say, "You have some abilities which might be of service to yourself and to others, but you have much to struggle with. I feel for your situation, and will place you in a condition to try the sincerity of your intentions, and as long as you act with diligence and fidelity, you shall not want for countenance and protection"? Alas, my Lord, George Barrington had never the supreme felicity of having such comfort administered to his wounded spirits, as matters have unfortunately turned out. But, my Lord, the die is cast! I am prepared to meet the sentence of the Court with respectful resignation, and the painful lot assigned me, I hope, with becoming resolution.'

Here Barrington bowed and retired, urbane and philosophic to the last, having, as one of his biographers put it, concluded a speech 'which, for the neatness of the language, and the pathos that runs through the whole, has never been exceeded at that bar'.[11] It was a good 'farewell performance'.

CHAPTER VII

TO BOTANY BAY (1791)

At a quarter to five on a cold dark morning at the end of January, 1791, a melancholy procession of 319 convicts was making its way from Newgate to Blackfriars Bridge, below which two lighters were waiting to receive them. Few people were about in the streets to watch the degrading sight which they presented—for many of the felons were 'scarce a degree above the brute creation, intoxicated with liquor, and shocking the ears of those they passed with blasphemy, oaths and songs, the most offensive to modesty'.[1] The unfortunate wretches were all of them loaded with irons and chained together, except one, who was permitted to walk unfettered between the Sheriff and Ackerman, the gaoler of Newgate.[2] This one was Barrington, who was deeply impressed by the ignominy of his position, yet full of 'an unspeakable satisfaction' that, after four long and dreary months of waiting in prison, the summons to make a move had at last come. The actual order to embark had indeed been given without warning; but on the previous night Barrington had managed to take a final farewell of many of his friends in London, who right to the end continued to prove

what a warm place he held in their affection. One of them had procured him a few pounds' worth of necessaries by way of equipment for his voyage, to supplement the meagre Government allowance; and none of his other acquaintances had come empty-handed to say good-bye. Each brought some small contribution—with the result that by locking-up time Barrington had 'such a collection of ventures, that I doubted whether I should be permitted to take them all on board'. There were, however, two absentees: his wife and child did not receive warning of the departure in time to see him off.

With Barrington's embarkation on board ship, the outlines of his career, so sharply defined in the glare of police-court and gaol throughout his middle life, begin once more to soften in a haze of mystery similar to that which, as we have seen, envelops his origin and youth. Concerning his voyage to Botany Bay we have no lack of information of one sort or another. Unfortunately it is about as contradictory on essential points of detail as it very well could be. If we were able to believe that Barrington could be in two different places at once, or perform exploits of which no one else apparently so much as heard, we could then simply accept the story of his voyage out as he published it himself some years later, told with a wealth of plausible incident and with obvious sincerity in his book, *A Voyage to Botany Bay*. But alas! those who have read the specimens of Barrington's forensic eloquence given in our earlier chapters, are warned that there is no limit to his power of

dressing up a story to suit himself. We must therefore accept his own account, attractive as it may be, with strict reserve, except where it is corroborated by other records, or at least is not inconsistent with them.

A fleet of nine transports was ready at the end of January to sail together for Australia, carrying the largest consignment of convicts that had yet been sent out to the new settlement. This was the fifth batch to go out since Governor Philip had led out the first expedition in 1787; and it comprised in all no less than 1,878 convicts, of whom 149 were women.[3] Most of them had been sentenced, like Barrington, to seven years' transportation, which in effect meant banishment for life, as no real opportunity for return offered itself, even at the expiry of a sentence. Now our first difficulty concerning Barrington is that we cannot be absolutely certain on which of the nine ships he sailed. Homer is reputed to have had seven birthplaces; and we find that four of the nine transports can lay claim, according to different records, to have had Barrington as their passenger. These four were the *Mary Ann* (300 tons), *Albemarle* (530 tons), *Active* (350 tons), and *William and Ann* (300 tons). On the *Mary Ann* he wrote his last letter to his wife at Plymouth [4]; on the *Albemarle* he travelled according to his own story in his own book; [5] on the *Active* he was seen at Cape Town; and on the *William and Ann* [6] or the *Active* [7] he is reputed to have arrived at Port Jackson, in Australia! It is conceivable that he may, for some reason, have been transferred from one transport to another during the

voyage—but hardly as often as three times. It is easiest in many ways to accept his own story of his having made the whole voyage on the *Albemarle*, for in no other way can we accept his natural and graphic account of the happenings on board that ship—unless indeed he borrowed bodily for his book the account of some other passenger who *had* travelled on the *Albemarle*.

Let us therefore consider, watchfully, his account of what happened on this ship.

The *Albemarle* carried 286 men and 6 women convicts.[8] From the very outset Providence seemed to intervene to make the way as smooth as possible for Barrington. For no sooner had he ascended the ship's side than he found that his friend—the same who had procured him the stock of necessaries the night before—had gained the ship ahead of him, arranged for the stowage of his baggage, and also secured him the privilege of exemption from wearing fetters and permission to walk freely about on deck. Finally, this friend had also persuaded—surely with the aid of a gratuity—the ship's boatswain to admit Barrington to share his mess, which included the second mate, carpenter and gunner, and to provide him with a hammock slung next his own, in such a position that Barrington could keep his little property securely under his own eye. In fact, that strong class distinction which was so engrained in eighteenth-century society was already at work to separate Barrington from the common herd of felons, as he had indeed been separated throughout his career by preferential treatment at the hands of the law.

His situation on the *Albemarle* was infinitely preferable to that of his fellow-convicts, who were crowded down in the hold, encumbered with irons, and stowed in hammocks hung only 17 inches apart from each other. The want of fresh air soon rendered their condition most deplorable, though it was mitigated a little by allowing them to take exercise on deck in turn, ten at a time. The six women were kept separate, in a 'snug berth' of their own.

After a week of waiting in Long Reach, their ship dropped down the river to Gravesend, where she took on board her Captain, Lieutenant Robert Parry Young, and a guard of twenty-three soldiers of the New South Wales Corps. Next day she got under weigh and anchored off the Downs; and on the following day the *Albemarle* joined her sister-transports at the Mother Bank and was ready to begin the voyage in earnest. What were Barrington's feelings at this moment—the parting of the ways of his life? By good fortune, we have preserved a letter which he wrote a few months later to a friend in Yorkshire, in which he vividly recalls his emotions at the time: 'Perhaps all is best that happens; but I leave you to judge, sir, what I must feel when we weighed anchor at Spithead, and our sails swelled with the wind which was to waft me, for ever perhaps, from everything that was dear to man. God knows what a number of painful circumstances I had then to combat; but surely they were sufficient to dismay the stoutest heart. If I was not penniless, I was, at least, next door to it, not being possessed of

a dozen guineas, including cash, necessaries, and property of every kind. What a stock for so vast a voyage! What a provision to carry me from one part of the world to the other, and to lay a foundation for future subsistence! I was, at the same time, in so impaired a state of health as to damn the probability that I should survive a month in so comfortless a condition. These, however, were the least of my afflictions: yet it was then I found what the heart was capable of enduring—what amazing resources it could strike out to support itself under the worst embarrassments. Till that hour I never thoroughly knew that the mind was indeed a kingdom in itself: it told me that life, at the best, was nothing more than a voyage or a journey, and, however rough to some, or smooth to others, the road might prove, it must still have an end; and where was the difference then?

'The world imagined I had done it some injury: but however it might have been magnified by the tongue of detraction, the balance between us in that respect was more equal than was generally supposed, for I also had met some injuries, and those of as harsh a nature as any I ever inflicted. But complaint was childish, and I knew it was by manly fortitude, not petulant repining, that great difficulties were to be surmounted. The ills I had done, or the ills I had received, were come to a crisis. My own misconduct I might regret, and time possibly might repair, but I could not recall it. And the injuries I had received in the course of my life had always proceeded from persons who were not worth

casting away a thought upon. So I banished from my mind every idle, vexatious idea, and every emotion of resentment and ill-nature. You, virtuous Europeans, I hope, will not be less generous than a poor banished sinner; you will pardon me, I trust, the many ruffianly deeds I have done, the many friends I have betrayed, the many houses I have fired, the many murders I have committed, and the many treasons I have conspired against my sovereign and the nation. To be serious, Sir, I left England and Europe without a spark of malevolence in my mind against any creature whatever, wishing every good heart as much happiness as it could wish itself, and every bad one to become better, perfectly resigned to whatever might happen, and not without hope in the Kindness of Providence. With this temper I committed myself to the winds and waves, and with this temper I hope I shall descend to the grave, and I am very easy about where that grave may happen, whether in Europe, in New South Wales, or in the bosom of the ocean. To my thinking, it is of little consequence where the *residuum* lies, if the *spirit* ascends to Heaven.' [9]

We may be pardoned for wondering if, while writing the above letter, Barrington's thoughts were not straying, and leading him to imagine himself once more in court, pleading with his ever plausible eloquence to convince his judges that here was a man indeed much misunderstood, and more sinned against than sinning!

After some further delays incurred in getting in

fresh stock and replenishing the ships' water-supply, the nine vessels set sail together and ran through the Needles in fine weather. At Plymouth Barrington caught his last sight of England, which 'brought a fresh pang to the bosom of one who in all probability was bidding it adieu for ever': but here he got a last opportunity to write a letter to his wife and child, who up to this moment—strange as it may seem—had received no communication from him as to his whereabouts. 'You may be sure', his letter ran, 'I have always pictured to myself the state of your mind upon finding me dragged away without our seeing one another at parting! But such are the laws of our country! It has, however, given me infinitely more pain and misery than the punishment itself. The many years' endearment, the fond affections of a father, and all the flattering hopes of a reclaimed life, in case I had been fortunate enough to have escaped on my late trial, crowded before me, and made me anxious indeed, to have remained with you and my dear child, and to have continued an useful member of society—at least to have bid a short adieu to you and the public. With respect to the prospect before me, sad and distressing as it may appear, all may ultimately be for our good. With the best of hearts and best of dispositions there is, God knows, an overbearing fate that counteracts our best designs, and makes us act (that is pickpockets) in spite of ourselves. But no more of that. It is now too late for me to reason.'[10] He concludes with a postscript which is lost to us, but which apparently gave direc-

tions to his wife to make preparations to follow him as soon as possible in some ship to Australia. Whether she ever did so is highly doubtful, as there is no record of her having been with Barrington after his arrival. Possibly the cost of the passage was prohibitive.

This letter was dated March 2 (from on board the *Mary Ann*), and by next day the fleet had left land and run straight into a stiff galé, which separated the vessels and left the *Albemarle* to continue her voyage alone across the Bay of Biscay. Barrington, whose frequent crossings from England to Ireland had accustomed him to the sea to some extent, soon gained his sea-legs. In spite of his poor state of health, his nerves were quite unshaken: for he tells us how, during this gale, which washed four men overboard, when he found that he could be of no service, he quietly retired to his hammock below, 'where I buried all thoughts of the contentious ocean in a sound sleep'.[11]

After several weeks' uneventful sailing, there suddenly occurred, if we are to believe Barrington, an event the most momentous of his whole career—marking for him the turning-point between crime and respectability. For the first time he found himself performing an act in defence of the society upon which he had hitherto preyed. Conceivably his experiences during the convict insurrections at the 'Hulks' in 1778 had sunk so deep in his mind, that they unconsciously determined his action at this moment of crisis. But let Barrington first tell the story in his own words:

'The Captain, with great humanity, had released many of the convicts who had been in a weakly state from their irons; and, as I have before observed, they were allowed alternately, ten at a time, to walk upon deck. Two of them, Americans, who had some knowledge of navigation, prevailed upon the majority of their comrades to attempt seizing the ship, impressing them with the idea that it would be easily effected, and that they would carry her to America, where every man would not only attain his liberty, but receive a tract of land from Congress, besides a share of the money arising from the sale of the ship and cargo. These arguments had the desired effect, and it was determined that at the first opportunity a part of those on the deck should, while the officers were at dinner, force the arms-chest, which was kept on the quarter-deck, at the same time make a signal to two of them, who should be keeping the sentinels in discourse, to attack them, get possession of their arms, and pass the word for those below to rush upon deck.'[12]

The revolt was planned for April 9, so Barrington tells us in his *History of New South Wales*, and was made possible by the collusion of two members of the ship's crew, who supplied the convicts with tools, to saw their irons off. 'The conspiracy was conducted with the greatest secrecy, and put in execution with equal spirit and audacity. A favourable opportunity presenting itself, the captain and most of the officers being below examining the stowage of some wine, a cask having leaked in the spirit-room, I was the only person on the deck excepting the man

at the helm. Hearing a scuffle on the main deck, I was going forward, but was stopped by one of the Americans, followed by another convict, who made a stroke at me with a sword he had wrested from one of the sentinels, which was put aside by a pistol which the other had just snapped at me. I snatched a hand-spike luckily in my reach, and brought the foremost to the ground; the man at the helm had quitted the wheel, and called up the Captain. I still kept my situation, guarding the passage of the quarter-deck; my antagonists, having retreated a few paces, but being joined by many others, were rushing on me, when the discharge of a blunderbuss from behind me among them wounding several, they retreated, and I was immediately joined by the Captain and the rest of the officers, who in a few minutes drove them all into the hold. An attempt of this kind required the most exemplary punishment: accordingly, two of the ringleaders were instantly hung at the yard-arm, and several others severely flogged at the gangway.' The treacherous seamen were afterwards dismissed the ship and landed at Madeira.

Barrington's action at once put him in high favour with the Captain, who paid him 'many handsome compliments, in having, as he was pleased to say, saved the ship'; and—more important than compliments—he received a promise that, when the *Albemarle* reached the Cape, the owners should be told of the service he had rendered, and he should be rewarded for his courage and presence of mind. Henceforth, too, for the rest of the voyage, Barring-

ton received preferential treatment in the way of diet; the steward was told to supply him with whatever he needed from the ship's stores, and nearly every day the Captain sent down to him from his own table some fresh meat or poultry, which at once established him in popularity with his messmates.

So far runs Barrington's own story of the part he played in the mutiny. What credit may we attach to it? In the first place, the mutiny certainly occurred, and on board the *Albemarle*; we have two accounts of it, one given by George Bowen, the ship's Master, in his official report of the occurrence, the other by one Robert Cock, who visited the *Albemarle* when she touched afterwards at Madeira to discharge her two mutinous sailors. These two accounts agree in detail, and also correspond closely with Barrington's story—except for the important fact that neither of them makes the least allusion to Barrington himself! Thus Cock, whose account is the most detailed, describes the scene: 'Siney headed the mutiny, and rushed forward to the quarter-deck with a drawn cutlass, and whilst he was aiming a blow at the man at the helm the master, George Bowen, who had heard a noise on deck, came out of the roundhouse with a blunderbuss loaded with three balls, and fired at Siney; one of the balls took effect below the right shoulder: when he felt himself wounded he threw down the cutlass and ran towards the forehold, and was followed by the other ringleader, Owen Lyons, and the rest of the convicts who had joined them. All the officers, seamen and sol-

diers were active in suppressing the mutiny, except Thomas Haynes and John Bennet, two mariners.' [13] Now it is singular that here is no mention of any convict helping to suppress the mutiny, much less playing the prominent part of which Barrington boasts. Yet so unusual an occurrence would surely have called for some remark in these reports, especially if the Captain was himself concerned in praising and rewarding Barrington.

But there is another even more surprising omission to mention, his 'having, as he was pleased to say, saved the ship'. Barrington, in his own very long letter written to his Yorkshire friend from the Cape at the beginning of July, makes no reference at all to the mutiny, though he has plenty to say on other matters of small detail connected with the voyage. He congratulates himself on having escaped the gout and rheumatism, and 'that dreadful disorder the scurvy, which too often makes such havoc at sea'. He adds that he has not even had an hour's sea-sickness. But to that most important event, that turning-point of his career, the mutiny, he nowhere alludes in the slightest way. The first time his version of the mutiny appears before us, is in *A Voyage to Botany Bay*, Part I, published in 1796. It looks as though Barrington had cleverly concocted a pretty story of his participation in the mutiny, at a time when refutation had become difficult, and his own reputation as a reformed character would lend it credence.

The most that can be said in favour of his mutiny story is that it is not impossible, however unlikely,

that he played some minor part—much exaggerated by himself—in resisting the mutineers, and if his story is wholly untrue, we are faced with the difficulty of finding another specific reason for the favourable treatment which he undoubtedly received from the Governor of New South Wales on his arrival at Sydney.

We next come to another curious discrepancy in Barrington's picturesque narrative of his voyage. Shortly after the mutiny, he tells us, the *Albemarle* touched at Santa Cruz, in the Canary Isles, to take in fresh stock and water.[14] And by now he was so much trusted that, on his expressing a desire to land, he was allowed to join a party of the ship's officers who had obtained leave to visit Oratava, a few miles from Santa Cruz, to get a near sight of the Peak of Teneriffe. Barrington gives a long account of this expedition, telling how they met an old Spanish soldier, who knew English and served them as guide, how they passed a night on shore, and returned to the ship the following afternoon. He is full of the beauties of the scenery, which he describes in elegant language, of which the following is a specimen: it refers to Oratava. 'Nothing can be more charming or romantically-situated than this delightful spot. The houses are low, but remarkably neat, and of white stone. On one side the street runs a pleasant rivulet from a copious spring of the clearest and sweetest water which, in its progress over a rugged pavement, murmurs most sweetly along. Hills rising above hills, crowned with woods of the most luxu-

riant foliage, and beautifully canopied with variegated clouds; and the stupendous Peak, towering its majestic head above the whole, forms a prospect most sublimely interesting. The surrounding valleys adorned with vineyards and watered by innumerable streams forming natural cascades, complete the picture.' [15] And a very pretty picture too, suggesting a lively imagination in its author, who tells us in the letter he wrote from the Cape a few weeks after this supposed excursion: 'We have now (July 1) been three months and two days at sea, *without putting into, or almost without seeing, any land* till we arrived here.' [16] The *Albemarle* probably handed over her two mutinous sailors to the agent, Cock, off Madeira; but this does not prove that any landing took place. And from Barrington's own letter we may conclude that his description of Teneriffe was borrowed from some other traveller.

After leaving Madeira, the *Albemarle*, which had now rejoined her sister transports, set a course to the South-West and sailed across the Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro. Barrington gives a lengthy description of the ceremony of 'Crossing the Line', which, however, is a common feature of all books of sea-travel of the period. When the sailors, masquerading as Neptune and Amphitrite, with their train, had clambered on board, they proceeded to demand toll in liquor or money from everybody who had not crossed the Line before. As it was the first time the *Albemarle* had made the voyage, the Captain was 'dunned' for half a gallon of rum and two pounds of sugar. Every per-

son on deck was then summoned to pay his footing, and when it came to Barrington's turn, the Captain generously paid his share for him. Then followed the usual practical jokes, sousing recalcitrants in the sea, or shaving them with an iron hoop over a tub of bilge water into which they were eventually upset: and the day closed with feasting and dancing in the forecastle.

Fair weather prevailed while the *Albemarle* sailed down the East Coast of South America and made Rio de Janeiro. Up to this time only four men and one woman had died; and this, says Barrington, 'was reckoned a very small number, their diet, the confinement of the voyage, change of climate, etc., being considered'. The rations allowed to the convicts were as follows: for every mess of six convicts, per week, 16 lb. bread, 12 lb. flour, 14 lb. beef (salt), 8 lb. pork (salt), 12 pints peas, 2 lb. rice, 1½ lb. butter.[17] The absence of fresh meat and vegetables from this diet caused the usual outbreaks of disease on the *Albemarle*; but after a stay of three weeks in harbour at Rio, the sick had all recovered and the ship was well stocked with pine-apples, oranges and bananas. Seeds and shoots of these fruits were also taken on board, for naturalisation, if possible, in New South Wales.

After leaving Rio, the *Albemarle* had a stormy run across the South Atlantic, and next touched at Cape Town at the beginning of July. This was the last port of call before Sydney, and the convicts and their guards had here their final chance of procuring articles which were indispensable to tolerable life in

Australia. It must be remembered that common manufactured articles, tools and clothing, were unobtainable in the new colony. According to his own account, it was now that Barrington received the reward for his conduct during the mutiny which the Captain had previously promised him. He was given a draft for £100 on a Cape Town merchant, with permission to land and visit the town as often as he pleased, subject only to the formality of notifying the ship's officers of his intention. 'This new and unexpected instance of the Captain's good opinion,' he says, 'independent of his bounty, struck me so forcibly, that at the time I could scarcely articulate my acknowledgements.'[18] He was careful not to abuse this privilege; though he landed every day, and laid out most of his money in necessary articles, he always returned on board punctually by sunset. During these visits ashore, he made friends with a Frenchman, who regaled him with accounts of the Hottentots and stories of big-game hunting in the interior.

From the Cape, on July 1, Barrington wrote his long letter to a Yorkshire friend, from which quotations have already been given. Even at this distance from home, he has not forgotten his vanity. He takes particular care to deny rumours that he has heard circulated concerning his death; and he looses a Parthian shot against his old *bête noire*, the Press. 'I understand it was reported in the papers that when I came on board my hair was cut off, and my clothes taken away; but nothing of the kind happened to me. I was permitted to retain both, and

continue to this hour to meet every indulgence that can soften my situation.' He declares that he finds himself in much better health than when he left England, and praises the climate, food, and wines of the Cape. Though his letter abounds with messages of goodwill to the friends he had left behind him, the tone in which he writes is optimistic, as though he was looking forward eagerly to life in the new colony. 'There are in the bay with us', he writes, 'two ships, which . . . are now on their return to England, the *Lady Juliana* and *Neptune*, which afford us an excellent opportunity of writing home. But, why should I say *home*? What is England, or Ireland, or Scotland to me now? Though I wish their prosperity as much as the richest of their inhabitants, yet that is my country where I can find content; and content is confined to no particular country—it may be excluded from a palace, it may be found in a wilderness. Thank Heaven, I am not much influenced by local prejudices. The nearer we approach the destined land where, in length of time, *every man is to sit under the shade of his own vine and his own fig-tree*, the more favourable the account becomes; but I shall suspend my opinion till I can judge from my own observation. There is no doubt but the country is very romantic, and the air salubrious, and these are material points. It is expected that in less than two months we shall arrive there.

'You find, dear Sir, that though in a state of captivity, I am still possessed of two of life's greatest blessings—health and a tranquil mind. Sweet Hope,

like a faithful companion, has constantly attended me in all my troubles, and still continues unshaken by my side. And why should I despair, who am yet in the prime of years? The united efforts of falsehood, malice, and rancour have not yet been able to deprive me of life or health—of the esteem and good wishes of the liberal part of the world—or even of that firmness of mind which the smiles of Fortune cannot give and her frowns cannot take away. I have the satisfaction to know that my heart was never by any means so black as some blacker hearts have suggested: and as for my life, it is in the care of Providence. Death is the grand ultimatum of the wealth and the poverty, the pleasure and the pain, of this world; this must happen to every one, and they who live longest will, perhaps, have most reason to say that 'tis "all vanity and vexation of spirit". How many did I leave behind in Europe in ample possession of beauty, youth, health, and splendour, who have since experienced, by the gripe of death, how vain a thing life is!'

After these sentiments, we are not surprised to hear that Barrington was, genuinely or hypocritically, turning religious. Lieutenant-Governor King, on his way out in the *Gorgon* to take command of the new settlement of Norfolk Island, was at the Cape at the same time as the transports. 'The convicts on board the different ships', he testifies in a letter home (dated July 29) to the Under-Secretary for Home Affairs, Evan Nepean, 'have behaved extremely well, and Mr. Barrington is now a religious convert.

He performs service, and gives a sermon twice on Sundays.' [19] The substance of these sermons it is not hard to reconstruct for ourselves.

The *Albemarle*, now loaded with a cargo of flour as well as a full complement of stores, left the Cape for her final run across the Indian Ocean to Australia. The transports appear to have sailed in two batches, the *Albemarle*, and a leaky and scarcely seaworthy sister-ship, the *Admiral Barrington*, bringing up the rear. As the fleet at once met heavy gales blowing from the north, the vessels became separated from each other, and reached their destination at different dates during the late summer and autumn. It was the end of July when the *Albemarle* left Cape Town, and, apart from a glimpse of Tasmania in passing, they saw land no more until the coast of New South Wales was sighted on October 12. On the next day they came to anchor at last at Port Jackson, at the mouth of the Sydney River.[20] 'It was not till ten next morning', continues Barrington in his narrative of the *Voyage*, 'that the convicts were landed; and even now the recollection of their appearance fills me with melancholy reflections. Many of them were emaciated with disease; and even those who laboured under no bodily complaint, through the fatigues of the voyage, change of climate, and a scanty allowance, were, nevertheless, in a wretched way. Their total number amounted to 250 men, 6 women, and the wife and child of one of the convicts who had obtained leave to accompany her husband; but yet during the whole voyage, the deaths of the

men amounted to no more than 36. To facilitate the landing of these newcomers, the boats from all the ships in the harbour were put in motion. The people, the moment they were landed, had all their old cloaths taken off them and burnt, to prevent the effects of any infectious disease, and new ones given them in their room from the King's store.' According to the surgeon's return when all were landed, over one-third of all the disembarked convicts were sick and incapable of labour.

Barrington contrasts his own favoured position with that of his unfortunate fellow-convicts. The Captain's recommendation went on to the Governor before he landed, and ensured him a reception which he himself regarded as very flattering. For Governor Philip informed him that, in consequence of his good behaviour on board ship, his future situation would be made as little irksome and inconvenient as possible. There was need of a proper person to superintend the convicts at a new settlement which was being laid out a few miles beyond Sydney at Paramatta; and the Governor provisionally appointed Barrington to this position of trust, directing him to proceed to Paramatta and take charge of a farmhouse there which was to serve as his dwelling. The sergeant in whose charge Barrington was placed took him off home after his interview with the Governor, and later showed him round Sydney and its Cove. This is the impression made upon him by the little settlement. 'The Governor's house is of stone, near seventy feet in front, and makes a very

handsome appearance. The houses of the officers are of brick; the rest are generally log houses, plaistered; the roofs are either shingled or thatched. Here is also an hospital, a good temporary building, and also barracks for the soldiers, and comfortable cabins for the officers, with gardens adjoining, but unluckily these gardens are not very productive, as the soil is very indifferent: and to this inconvenience must be added the depredations of rats and thieves. A mile or two from the Cove, the soil is considerably better, where the officers and others have little farms. There are also brick-kilns, and a pottery, both of which articles they would bring to tolerable perfection, were they possessed of the materials used to glaze their earthenware. I wonder there are not more stone buildings there, stone resembling that of Portland being at hand in great abundance, exceedingly soft, but hardens very much after it is wrought and exposed to the weather.' [21]

The next morning the sergeant took Barrington up to Paramatta, some four hours' distance from Sydney. Paramatta was situated on a crescent-shaped hill, crowned with a redoubt and protected by a detachment of military in barracks, kept to overawe the convicts. The house allotted to Barrington he describes as 'a compact little cottage, with four rooms in it. The situation is most delightful, being in the midst of pleasure-gardens. The convicts' houses form a line in front, at some distance; they have each a small garden, and those who have been industrious seem very comfortable, as their day's

work is not so hard as many working-men's in England.' Barrington presented himself and his credentials to the officer commanding the troops, and was told that there would be a general muster of the convicts made before him on the following day. Accordingly, in the morning some 400 convicts were duly paraded and inspected by their new superintendent. After this, Barrington went round to see the different gangs at work, some at brick- or tile-making, some at building huts, others at clearing ground, bringing in timber and making roads. He found them 'much more attentive to their business, and respectful to those over them, than I could possibly have imagined'.

He was naturally nervous at the outset lest his own past record and situation in life should make it impossible for him to maintain discipline among the convicts. 'I had some apprehensions that . . . I should have been exposed to many mortifications, although shielded by the protection of my office; but I saw few faces who recollected me, and those who did behaved in a most respectful manner.' His main business was to report the progress made in the different works proceeding at Paramatta, for which purpose he was furnished with abstracts from the headmen or overseers of the various gangs. He soon fell into the routine of the work and 'in less than a week was as much at home, and as perfectly master of the business, as though I had been coeval with the colony'.[22]

Three settlements had, by the middle of 1791,

been established on the mainland of New South Wales. Sydney, the original choice of the first expedition of 1788, had been selected in a hurry because it afforded good water and was conveniently near Port Jackson, 'the most complete harbour in the universe'.[23] It was situated about 6 miles from the entrance to the harbour, which itself was more than $\frac{3}{4}$-mile across. From the beginning it was found that the soil was so sandy and sterile as to be hardly worth cultivating; consequently, apart from the vegetables grown in its gardens, Sydney could not supply itself with food. It therefore came to serve as the residence of the Governor and his principal officers, together with the necessary number of convicts to act as servants and to man the storehouses and fishing-boats, etc. Convicts whose sentences had expired and who were in hopes of getting home somehow or other to England, also chose Sydney to live in. Altogether, the population at this time numbered about a thousand.[24] Some of the houses were built of wood—though good timber was scarce—and the rest of clay bricks so weak, for want of limestone cement, as to make it impossible to build above one storey.

A second and larger settlement had been established about 16 miles west of Sydney at Paramatta. This consisted of one long street nearly a mile long, with a row of huts on each side well spaced out from one another. It possessed a hospital, church, and storehouses. The central feature of Paramatta was Rose Hill, where the Governor had a second house

and a garden that abounded with grapes, melons, and other fruits and vegetables. It is described as 'so situated by nature that . . . it is impossible for art to form so rural a scene'.[25] At Rose Hill was also a large park, where Government cattle were grazed, and four cornfields, though these were not productive of much wheat, but chiefly grew maize, oats, and barley. Altogether nearly 1,000 acres of ground were under cultivation.

About 5 miles beyond Paramatta a third settlement had just been commenced, called Toongabbe, where the soil was even better than at Paramatta. It was at these two places that the main body of convicts was concentrated, employed in clearing the ground of trees and roots, and erecting buildings. The population was about 1,800.

The little colony as a whole thus numbered under 3,000 souls; of these 2,450 were convicts, including 345 women and 77 children; 270 were soldiers, including 18 commissioned and 31 non-commissioned officers; 35 were emancipated convicts turned settlers; 13 were civilian officials, and 14 other free civilians.[26] There were also 12 women who were free, but married to convicts. The officers lived in brick-built houses, the soldiers in barracks, and the convicts in log-huts.

The land was allotted by the Governor to three classes of persons—the military, convicts whose sentences had expired, and free settlers. The soldiers had enlisted to serve for three years, and at the end of their time were encouraged to become permanent

settlers on the land. Any non-commissioned officer might receive a grant of 130 acres, if single, or 160 if married: any private soldier might receive 80 to 100 acres, with 10 acres extra for each child. These allotments of land were free of all rents and taxes for the first ten years, and thereafter subject to a quit-rent of 1s. a year for every 50 acres.[27] Private soldiers were expected to provide their own labour; but all civil and military officers were allowed two convicts each to work for them and to be maintained out of the public stores for the first two years: any additional labour they required had to be maintained by them at their own expense.[28] There was also an allotment of land to each barracks for the use of the soldiers quartered there in growing vegetables; but no convict labour was allowed here. Certain reservations of land for public purposes were also made, 400 acres near each town for a church and its minister, and 200 for a schoolmaster.

Next came land-grants to ex-convicts. When a convict had either served out his sentence or received a pardon, he might be allocated a small holding, usually 30 acres, with the proviso that he must reside upon it and cultivate it for at least five years. It was found that some ex-convicts took up grants of this sort solely with the object of raising funds to buy a passage back to England; and to prevent this, no convict-settler was allowed to sell his holding without the Governor's consent. Such settlers were, however, entirely without capital at the outset, and until their land could be made to yield

a crop, they had to be supported and clothed—usually for about eighteen months—out of the public store. In addition, they were given a couple of pigs each, and the necessary implements and seed-grain for the first season's cultivation. The first convict-settler, James Ruse, had entered on his land in November, 1789, and was supported by the public store till January, 1791, after which time he maintained himself and his wife and child.[29] At first care was taken to keep the allotments to convicts separated from each other by intermediate Crown allotments; but later these spaces had to be filled up because of the danger of native attacks on the isolated holdings.

The class which was most needed, but was least in evidence, was that of free settlers. By the end of 1791 these still numbered only three, although abortive attempts had been made from time to time in London to attract volunteers—a group of Quakers, for instance. Honesty and intelligence were qualities lacking in the ex-soldier and ex-convict settlers alike; and these deficiencies could not be made good by mere hard labour. There was a great difference between convicts and emigrants used to labour. 'Among the latter', said Governor Philip, 'few are idle or useless, and they feel themselves interested in their different employments. On the contrary, among the convicts we have few who are inclined to be industrious or who feel themselves anyways interested in the advantages which are to accrue from their labours, and we have many who are help-

less and a dead weight on the settlement.' The surgeon of the colony reported that over 100 of the convicts came under this category, as disabled by old age or disease; one was a complete cripple, and two were imbeciles. A leavening of better stuff was sorely wanted, for 'the vicious and the idle are not easily reformed while they are incorporated in one body'.[30] Reports which reached England from the military and the convicts themselves were anything but alluring. 'The country is past all dispute a wretched one,' wrote an officer, 'a very wretched, and totally incapable of yielding to Great Britain a return for colonising it. Amidst its native productions I cannot number one which is valuable as an article of commerce. There is no wood for naval purposes; no fibrous grass or plant from which cordage can be made; no substance which can aid or improve the labours of the manufacturer; no mineral productions; no esculent vegetables worth the care of collecting and transporting to other climes; and lastly, which is of the most serious consideration, no likelihood that the colony will be able to support itself in grain or animal food for many years to come, so that a regular annual expense is entailed on the mother-country as long as it shall be kept.' [31]

From the beginning there had been a chronic deficiency in the food-supply, and during 1790 the colony was faced with the prospect of actual starvation. Thus in April of that year Governor Philip found it necessary to ration the whole population, without distinction, on a basis of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour, 2 lb.

salt pork, and 2 lb. rice for seven people per day! [32] No wonder that the customary form of invitation when asking anyone out to dine was "Will you bring your own bread, and come and see me?" [33] Like a beleaguered city, the colony waited anxiously for the arrival of either a government supply-ship or even a new fleet of convict transports. 'In this deplorable situation,' wrote a surgeon's mate, 'famine is staring us in the face. Two ounces of pork is the allowance of animal food for twenty-four hours, and happy is the man that can kill a rat or crow to make his a dainty meal . . . I dined most heartily the other day on a fine dog, and hope I shall soon again have an invitation to a similar repast. The animals that were meant to stock the country are almost all butchered.' [34] At the same time their clothes were worn threadbare, and many of them were reduced to going barefoot. A few years later, in 1794, the colony came even nearer to disaster. The last ounce of animal food then in store was actually issued to all ranks and descriptions of people alike, the convicts were respited from all labour, and a general despondency set in; when, in the evening of the same day, two ships from London and India, laden with provisions of all kinds, sailed into harbour.[35]

Most miserable was the lot of the convicts. The main body of these, at the time of Barrington's arrival and after, was employed in clearing the ground at Toongabbe. They had to fell trees, grub up the stumps, root out the shrubs and grass, turn up the ground with spades or hoes, and carry away

and stack the timber. The magnitude of this task can be guessed from a description of what the trees at Toongabbe were like. 'Both hills and vales are covered with trees to an amazing height and in many instances nine yards in circumference. They grow perfectly straight, and are nearly 100 feet high before the branches shoot off; they are supported entirely by the bark, which often bids defiance to the best English saws and axes, the insides being entirely decayed and rotten.' It took 500 convicts a whole year to clear 720 acres of ground of this sort.[36] They began work every day at five in the morning, and knocked off at ten or eleven, to resume at two and work on till sunset: the length of the midday rest varied according to the time of year. At night they were housed in huts each of which held from fourteen to eighteen persons; one woman convict was assigned to each hut to keep it clean, and also to prepare victuals for the men at work. No beds or blankets were provided for the convicts, though the nights were very cold, and a difference of 30° temperature between eight in the morning and two in the afternoon was common.[37] A few convicts had brought bedding with them from the transport in which they had arrived, and those with resources of their own purchased them. The remainder of their equipment was equally deficient. 'They have neither bowl, plate, spoon, or knife but what they make of the green wood of this country, only one small iron pot being allowed to dress their poor allowances of meat, rice, etc.; in short, all the neces-

sary conveniences of life they are strangers to, and suffer everything they could dread in their sentence of transportation. Some time since it was not uncommon for seven or eight to die in one day, and very often at work, they being kept in the field till the last moment, and frequently while being carried to the hospital. Many a one has died standing at the door of the storehouse waiting for his allowance of provision, merely for want of sustenance and necessary food.' [38] The magnitude of the death-rate can be estimated by the fact that between March 18 and December 8, 1792, 490 deaths occurred in a total population of 4,693. Barrington himself testifies that 'we have frequently four or five hundred on the doctor's list, who are individually visited daily by the surgeon; upwards of fifty have died in a month, in the generality of whom nature appears entirely exhausted, and many of them were so fairly worn out, that they expired without a groan and to all appearance did not experience the smallest degree of pain'.[39]

The lot of the women convicts was better than that of the men. Every officer, settler and soldier was entitled, and encouraged, to provide himself with a wife; but all the women in the colony together numbered no more than ten to fifteen per cent. of its population. Many women convicts, therefore, were married to soldiers or settlers. Of the remainder some served the convicts as hut-keepers, others worked at making or mending clothing, while a few were sent out to the fields, or,

as punishment for some offence, to work alongside the men convicts.

In view of the privations which the convicts had to endure, the sternest discipline was necessary to keep them in order. Their superintendents, 'a set of merciless wretches', rendered their lives miserable by ill-treatment. For the most trifling offence a convict was set in the stocks and left without food or drink until it was convenient to examine him; if he was then found guilty, he was lashed to a wheel and given twenty-five lashes, known as 'a Botany Bay dozen'. Crimes which were ordinarily punishable in England or on board ship with a mere dozen lashes, were here punished with 200 or 300. Theft was, from the beginning of the colony, regarded as *the* grave offence, punishable by death or transportation for life to Norfolk Island, which bore the character of a penal settlement even severer than New South Wales. But the severity of penalty attaching to theft was natural enough in a community which was on the verge of starvation every March or April, never possessed enough clothing to go round, and imported all its manufactures at ruinous prices from the Cape or from India. In March, 1792, the ration of food issued was 5 lb. flour and 4 lb. pork, to last a man seven days; and even at this ration the colony had flour to last only $7\frac{1}{2}$ weeks.[40] Some of the prices of provisions that prevailed at Paramatta at this time were as follows: [41]

Flour, 1*s*. per lb.
Maize, 11*s*. to 13*s*. per bushel.

Hens, 7*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* each.
Eggs, 3*d.* each.
Fresh Pork, 1*s.* 1*d.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* per lb.
Salt Pork, 10*d.* to 1*s.* per lb.
Potatoes, 3*d.* to 4*d.* per lb.
Coffee, 2*s.* to 3*s.* per lb.
Sugar, 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb.
Soap, 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb.
Cheese, 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* per lb.

The quality of the ration provided was as bad as its quantity was generally inadequate. The pork, for instance, had been salted for three or four years, and had become so old and dry that, if boiled, it shrunk to half its dimension. The usual method of cooking it was to cut off the daily morsel, and toast it on a fork before the fire, catching the drip which fell on a slice of bread, or in a saucer of rice. Flour was too precious to be baked: the soldiers and convicts used to boil it with greens instead.[42] In the laying out of Paramatta, indeed, some attempt was made to provide the convicts with gardens, where they could grow vegetables for themselves; for the Governor noticed that 'frequently having it in their power to exchange vegetables for the little necessaries which the stores do not furnish makes them begin to feel the benefits they may draw from their industry'. But the fact that the convicts could only work at these gardens on Saturdays and Sundays, that there was little or no money circulating in the colony, and that there were few commodities against which their surplus vegetables could be traded, must have reduced the value of this indulgence. The convicts could, however, barter their produce with the natives for fish.

Under these circumstances, the bane of the colony was petty robbery and fraud. Convicts were always trying to steal vegetables, chickens, and small tools from one another, from the settlers and soldiers, and even from the Governor's garden. Worse still, year after year a large proportion of the communal harvest was lost through theft. Thus the excellent harvest of 1791 yielded 4,844 bushels of maize, of which no less than 1,500 bushels were stolen by hungry convicts between the time when it began to ripen and the time when it was housed! The thieves concealed the corn in the woods, and tried to carry it to their huts in small quantities as needed—a process which often led to their detection. Several convicts, on the other hand, died from cramming their stomachs with the raw grain as they carried it into the public granary.[43] To check these thefts, an armed watch was set at night to guard the storehouses and the Governor's house; and corporal punishment was ruthlessly applied. But the most deterrent penalty that could be devised was to exile delinquents from Paramatta and send them to break up new ground beyond its outskirts. This separation from the main body of their fellows was so dreaded that one offender committed suicide to avoid it. It was, however, also noticed that the number of robberies varied in inverse proportion to the size of the weekly food ration. Whenever a fresh provision ship arrived from England, and more food could be distributed, fewer crimes were committed. The fact was that the whole attention of the ordinary

convict was necessarily concentrated on food, and nothing else. For he had no chance of getting any of the common luxuries of life. Spirits were absolutely forbidden him, though occasionally a little might be smuggled in by the crew of some ship which touched Port Jackson. A few of the settlers also attempted to grow tobacco which, when prepared, fetched 10*s*. or 12*s*. a lb.; but this too the Governor forbade. There remained gambling, which became *the* great secret vice of the colony. The convicts gambled away their miserable clothes, tools, even rations of food, in order to squeeze a drop of excitement out of their monotonous life.

Occasionally, indeed, in desperation they tried to find a way of escape out of the colony. From time to time, individually or in small groups, convicts stole away into the surrounding bush and tried to live without labour. Usually they were either found, or came in voluntarily, after a few days, 'in a state of deplorable wretchedness, naked, and nearly worn out with hunger'.[44] One party had the pathetic notion that it could find a way overland to China: they discovered their mistake only after weeks of privation. 'Some of them had subsisted chiefly by sucking the flowering shrubs and wild berries of the woods; and the whole exhibited a picture of misery, that seemed sufficient to deter others from the like extravagant folly.'

The most daring and ambitious of all the attempts to escape during this period was that made in March, 1791, by a party of eleven convicts, which included

a woman and two children, under the leadership of a man named Bryant. These contrived to hoard their rations and so accumulate a supply of provisions; they then seized the Governor's cutter by night and put out to sea, Bryant having taken the precaution to buy a compass, quadrant, and chart, from the master of a Dutch ship which had touched at Sydney. They sailed along the coast of New Holland to the north, and in spite of being chased and attacked by natives eventually reached Timor, in the Dutch East Indies, where they pretended to be survivors from a wrecked ship, and were kindly treated. But one of the party betrayed their secret during a drunken fit; they were thrown into prison, and later handed over to an English man-of-war. Six of the party, including Bryant's wife and one child, survived the subsequent voyage home to England, where they were put upon their trial, and sentenced to serve the unexpired portion of their sentences in Newgate. The irony of the whole episode was that Bryant's sentence had already expired before he organised the escape: his wife too, had but two years more to serve.[45]

Escapes on a minor scale were frequent; but revolts were very rare. A decision to issue the weekly ration in daily portions, to prevent trafficking in it, caused a 'tumultuous assembly' of the convicts before the Governor's house at Paramatta in December, 1791; but they dispersed after a few threats, and a severe proclamation followed forbidding convicts to meet together in this way. From

time to time plots were suspected or discovered for the seizure of arms or for attacks on the storehouses: but quarrels and treachery among the conspirators could always be relied upon to lead to a betrayal of the secret to authority.

The supreme authority over the whole colony, civil and military, was vested in its Governor, by virtue of his commission from the King. He was allowed to levy troops, build towns and fortifications, and maintain discipline everywhere on land, though he had no jurisdiction over acts committed at sea. All grants of land were made by him, and he had complete control of the colony's finances. He could punish or pardon whom he would, and proclaim martial law in case of emergency. In short, the Governor was dictator of the colony. He was supplied with a silver public seal bearing on one side the King's arms, and on the other 'a representation of convicts landing at Botany Bay, received by Industry, who, surrounded by her attributes, a bale of merchandise, a beehive, a pickaxe, and a shovel, is releasing them from their fetters, and pointing to oxen ploughing and a town rising on the summit of a hill, with a fort for its protection'.[46] Under the Governor's authority were constituted two law courts, one for civil, the other for criminal cases. Both were presided over by a Judge-Advocate appointed by the Crown; the first person to hold this office was Captain Collins, the historian of the colony's early years. The Judge-Advocate sat in the criminal court with six officers, and in the civil

court with two 'fit and proper' persons appointed by the Governor. The Governor, the Lieutenant-Governor and the Judge-Advocate were all Justices of the Peace *ex officio*, while the Chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson, and two civilians, the Surveyor and the Registrar, were appointed additional magistrates by the Governor. The magistrates usually sat weekly to take examinations and make inquiry into offences; they ordered whatever punishments they thought necessary, always reporting their proceedings to the Governor.

It will be seen that the principal feature of this constitution was the careful balance preserved between the civil and the military in the direction of the colony. It was the business of the soldiers to protect the public stores and carry out any military operations directed by the Governor; but not to interfere with public administration. The connecting link between the civilian and military elements was the Lieutenant-Governor, who was always the commanding officer of the troops serving in New South Wales. But it was also provided that, in the case of the death or absence of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, their authority should devolve on the senior officer in the colony.

These arrangements led to a good deal of friction in the early years of the settlement. The defence of the colony had originally been entrusted to a corps of marines, who had volunteered for three years' service, and had been promised grants of land in New South Wales if they wished to settle there at the

expiration of that time. But these marines proved a hindrance rather than a help to the Governor. The officers tried to maintain that the Governor's commission did not give him power to empanel them as a court-martial; while the rank and file were disorderly and discontented after their arrival at Sydney

They failed to keep down thieving, and at one time six of them were hanged for themselves stealing from the public stores.[47] This lack of support from the officers of the marines, and the unsatisfactory conduct of the corps as a whole, put Governor Philip in a most awkward situation. As he had but a handful of free civilian officials to rely upon, he was compelled to have recourse to the best of the convicts to help him in the maintenance of order. Thus early in 1790 he appointed a night-watch patrol of twelve convicts whom he could trust. This expedient answered well so far as keeping down theft went; but it met with great hostility from the marines, because the patrol was empowered to detain even soldiers and sailors who were behaving in a suspicious way at night. The Major of Marines declared that it was an insult to his corps to allow convicts to stop soldiers: and the Governor, in the interest of peace, modified his orders to the patrol accordingly. But the general position grew no better: and so at last it was decided to withdraw the marines, and replace them by a specially-raised regiment of infantry, the New South Wales Corps.

The new Corps, under Major Grose, arrived in detachments during 1791, while the marines were

sent home at the close of that year. But soon discontent appeared among the newcomers also. No provision had been made for land grants to the officers while serving; and thus it appeared as though, while sharing all the hardships of short rations and lack of clothing which the rank and file of the soldiers and convicts endured, they had no part in its compensations. At the end of 1792 Governor Philip accordingly allowed the officers to occupy temporarily some of the land which was marked to be built upon later. This discontented spirit among the officers led eventually to a kind of revolution in the government of the colony: for when, in December, 1792, Governor Philip, who had guided the settlement from its first beginnings four years previously, relinquished his office and sailed for England, the first act of his successor, Major Grose, was to supersede the civil magistrates at Sydney and Paramatta by the captains commanding the detachments of troops in each place. For the first time, too, a distinction in favour of the military was made in the issue of rations from the public stores. On the other hand, the hours of labour of the convicts were reduced a little, and more time allowed them for the cultivation of their grounds.

These divisions which existed amongst the 'aristocracy' of the colony were fortunate for some of the convicts, because they occasioned the need for employing those who could be trusted as superintendents and constables. There were not enough free civilians and well-affected officers to provide, by

themselves, the necessary supervision. This gave the chance to men like Barrington, who had a superior education or some other special qualification, and the sense to support authority. The superintendents were kept by Governor Philip under his own personal control, so that he remained in close contact with them and soon found out which were really loyal and efficient. And in these early years there was a readiness to grant pardons to reformed convicts, provided they showed no anxiety to quit the colony at once, but were ready to settle on the land and form the nucleus of a free 'middle-class'.

To complete this picture of the infant society in which Barrington found himself, it only remains to say something of those who must have watched with strangely bewildered feelings the incursion of the white man into their land—the aboriginal natives. Governor Philip estimated [48] that the total number of natives living round about Sydney, Paramatta, etc., was fifteen hundred, so that they were soon outnumbered by the colonists. From the very beginning, however, the Governor aimed at establishing the friendliest possible relations with them: 'it was my determination', he says, 'from my first landing that nothing less than the most absolute necessity should ever make me fire upon them'. He took care to observe their customs, and to encourage them to become acquainted with European ways. At the end of 1790 two natives were captured with the idea of civilising them and using them as interpreters and go-betweens. One of these escaped, but the other,

named Benillong, lived with Philip, became domesticated, accompanied him to England, and eventually returned in 1795 with a veneer of British culture.

With the best will in the world, however, it was impossible to keep the peace between the convicts and the natives—two types of humanity who agreed only in their slender recognition of the meaning of *meum* and *tuum*. The half-starved convicts took to stealing from the natives their spears and other implements while they were out fishing, in order to sell them as trophies to the crews of visiting transports. In retaliation, the natives took to cutting off stray convicts on the outskirts of the settlement, and on one occasion when Governor Philip was trying to parley with them, they wounded him in the shoulder with a spear. Then as soon as the settlers began to raise considerable corn-crops, they in their turn suffered from the depredations of the natives. Apart from these encounters, the natives maintained an attitude of aloofness from the white men. They watched the growth of the strange new society in their land without the power to interfere, or the ability to assimilate themselves to the civilisation it represented.

CHAPTER VIII

'CITIZEN BARRINGTON' (1791–1804)

In the middle of December, 1791, the last of the corps of marines which had come out with Governor Philip four years previously, sailed on the *Gorgon* for England. Among them went Captain Watkin Tench, one of the earliest chroniclers of the colony's history. Before he quitted New South Wales, knowing that he was not likely to have another opportunity of seeing the country in which he took such an interest, he made a tour of inspection of the settlement, and visited the principal ex-convict settlers on their holdings. 'But before I bade adieu to Rose Hill,' he concludes this part of his narrative, 'in all probability for the last time in my life, it struck me, that there yet remained one object of consideration not to be slighted: Barrington had been in the settlement between two and three months, and I had not seen him. I saw him with curiosity. He is tall, approaching to six feet, slender, and his gait and manner bespeak liveliness and activity. Of that elegance and fashion, with which my imagination had decked him (I know not why), I could distinguish no trace. Great allowance should, however, be made for depression, and unavoidable deficiency of dress.

His face is thoughtful and intelligent; to a strong cast of countenance, he adds a penetrating eye and a prominent forehead; his whole demeanour is humble, not servile. Both on his passage from England, and since his arrival here, his conduct has been irreproachable. He is appointed high-constable of the settlement at Rose Hill, a post of some respectability, and certainly one of importance to those who live there. His knowledge of men, particularly of that part of them into whose morals, manners, and behaviour he is ordered especially to inspect, eminently fit him for the office. I cannot quit him without bearing my testimony, that his talents promise to be directed in future, to make reparation to society for the offences he had heretofore committed against it.' [1]

The post to which Barrington was assigned at the outset was rather more humble than Captain Tench here suggests. In spite of the necessity which the Governor felt of using the more prominent and trustworthy convicts as civilian officials, he can hardly have been altogether unaware of Barrington's record and the frequent chances of reform which he had failed to take in England. Accordingly he tested him first in a subordinate position. The whole settlement, for purposes of police, had been divided into four districts, to each of which was assigned its own watch, consisting of one principal and two subordinate constables, chosen from among the best-behaved of the convicts. These watchmen were given authority to patrol at all hours of the night,

and to visit any place they might think necessary for the discovery of any felony, trespass or misdemeanour. If they suspected anyone of lawbreaking they might arrest him, and they were even required to detain any soldier or sailor found wandering abroad after hours, and to send word to the nearest guardhouse. If any theft was reported to them, they were bound to do their best to trace the offenders; and in addition to their night-duty, they were directed to take cognisance of such convicts as gamed, or sold or bartered their clothes and provisions, and to report them for punishment. The military were required to give the watch any assistance they might need in carrying out their duties; and each watchman was provided with a short baton to distinguish him during the night and to denote his office in the colony.[2] In a word, they had duties and a position analogous to those of the Bow Street Runners in London; and we may spare a moment to wonder what Townsend would have thought, could he have seen Barrington at last enrolled among his own fraternity, defending the sacred rights of property and chasing suspected thieves!

During the day the watchmen were required to make a report to the Judge-Advocate of the settlement concerning the occurrences of the previous night. Beyond this they had only light duties to perform; and Barrington soon found that his own task of inspecting the progress of the public works at Toongabbe, and making a return to the superintendent in charge, left him with a good deal of free

time on his hands during the day. He used this leisure to visit the farms of the ex-convict settlers round about Paramatta, and was impressed to see how those whose sentences had expired or been remitted for good behaviour were enjoying their own small properties, and being tided over the first eighteen months of their farming by food, clothing, tools, and seed from the public stores. He noticed that 'as there were many very industrious and careful men among them, their stock soon began to thrive, and the face of the country show evident signs of culture'.[3] Quick to imitate what he saw was the only way to lead a tolerable life in the colony, Barrington hastened to make use of the small stock of goods he had purchased at the Cape, and also of the presents he had brought from England, to do a little trading on his own account. This small capital, he says, 'enabled me to furnish the officers and settlers with various little articles, which in general were not to be had by the ships, so that in a short time I had collected the following valuable stock for my farmyard: a sow in pig; two fine porkers; a young she-goat and two kids; an English dunghill-cock, three laying hens, and one with a brood of chickens and young ducks; these, with a young kangaroo which I had been at infinite pains in rearing, three native dogs, myself, a convict woman servant and her son Timothy, a youth between twelve and thirteen—a tractable and useful lad—comprised the whole family'. Evidently Barrington was now once more making himself the centre of a small circle of

friends, and adapting his talents to the new conditions of his life in a way that certainly seems remarkable, when we remember the elegant young fop who used to haunt Covent Garden and the Pantheon. He adds that he had always had a 'predilection for horticulture', and that it was his garden that attracted Governor Philip's attention and earned his recommendation when he paid his next visit to Rose Hill.

Barrington was now sufficiently settled to have leisure for a little romance. He had formed a friendship with a young man who had taken a farm on the very edge of the settlement, about 4 miles north of Paramatta, and was in the habit of walking over to see him once or twice a week, accompanied by his boy Tim. On one of these walks they shot a kangaroo, and in dragging its carcase to a cavity in a ravine where it could be hidden and fetched home later, they lost their way. Evening came on, they wandered about in the bush, and at last took refuge in an empty native hut. They presumed that the natives had gone off to hunt, but dared not sleep without taking it in turns to watch. Even in this desert, Barrington had not abandoned his reading habits: for he tells us that 'not being inclined to sleep myself, I took a book from my pocket, and by firelight endeavoured to amuse myself till day-break'. Barrington was as cool and philosophical as ever; at any moment the natives might have returned, when they would certainly have done their best to kill the intruders! In the end this reading had its natural

effect; he fell asleep, and was awakened by the bites of some ants on whose hill he was lying.

In full daylight they had no difficulty in finding their way back to Rose Hill, a natural landmark. But whilst they were returning, they came upon a native lying wounded at the mouth of a small cave, with his sister close by unable to help him. Barrington offered to watch over the wounded man while she fetched her relations; and in due course Palerino (so he was called) was carried to his hut and revived. Barrington later discovered, after two or three visits, that Palerino and his sister Yeariana had been ambushed by natives of another unfriendly tribe, and that in beating off their assailants Palerino had been wounded by an arrow. Naturally Barrington was regarded by the family as their benefactor; while he, for his part, was immediately attracted by the charms of the black lady whom he had so gallantly succoured. Yeariana's image, he rapturously declared, 'had made a strong impression on my mind, being the most interesting I ever saw, with a form that might serve as a perfect model for the most scrupulous statuary; her face and hair unlike anything I had ever seen in this country; the first of a perfect oval, or Grecian shape, with features singularly beautiful, and as fine a pair of eyes as can be imagined; the latter long, and of a shining black. She was likewise of a much lighter colour than any of her countrywomen, and might easily have been taken for a beautiful Oriental Creole.' The long and short of the story was that, in due course, Barrington

took Yeariana to live with him, and was able to reflect that 'my domestic concerns were now assuming a very promising aspect'. The liaison, however, like all other similar affairs which are recorded of Barrington, did not last long. Palerino got into trouble again, this time by knocking on the head a neighbour belonging to another tribe; for this offence he was compelled to run the gauntlet among his accusers' spears, and Yeariana took the opportunity of the crisis to desert Barrington and return to the bosom of her family.

Throughout 1792, while this little love-story was in progress, Barrington was assiduous in his constabulary duties, and earning a reputation for reliability. It was recognised by the authorities that a man in his situation was peculiarly likely to attract the envy and hatred of the convicts over whom he was put in authority; and that consequently, he would have strong temptations to relax his vigilance and indulge in favouritism.[4] Barrington avoided this. He was 'diligent, sober and impartial'; and somehow, he remained popular with everybody. Accordingly Philip determined to exercise his prerogative and raise him from the status of a convict to provisional freedom. The Governor was broken in health, and had obtained permission to leave the colony and resign his office. But one of his last acts before setting sail from Port Jackson during December, 1792, was to make out a warrant of emancipation in favour of three convicts, one of whom was Barrington. This warrant, dated November 3,

remitted the remainder of his seven years' sentence, and furthermore granted him a holding of thirty acres of land 'in an eligible situation' at Paramatta. The pardon was conditional upon his not attempting to quit the colony without the Governor's express permission; and should this permission be granted, he was further to provide his passage home himself.[5] Thus Barrington, for the third time in his life, was so fortunate as to have his legal punishment cut short. He had only been a convict on Australian soil for thirteen months, and now enjoyed a new footing in society, with a small but solid basis of property beneath him. The last incentive to lead his old parasitical and predatory life had vanished.

Barrington was fortunate also in the time chosen for his emancipation; for he thus escaped the deterioration in the lot of the convicts during the period that followed Governor Philip's departure. It was more than a year before his successor was chosen in London; and even when, on February 5, 1794, the *London Gazette* announced Governor Hunter's appointment, another eighteen months passed before the latter actually took over the administration at Sydney. For nearly three years, therefore, the Colony was left in charge of Major Grose, Philip's Lieutenant-Governor and Commander of the New South Wales Corps. Major Grose at once put into operation his ideas concerning the supersession of civilian by military authority, and the discrimination necessary between the military and convicts in matters of food. The rule of the military oligarchy

which followed undid a great part of the progress that the previous four years' patient work had achieved. The soldiers rapidly got out of hand, behaved in a riotous and overbearing manner towards the civilians and convicts, and speedily demoralised the whole colony. The officers accepted large grants of land from the Lieutenant-Governor, and demanded free convict-labour to work them. Consequently the cultivation of the public cornfields languished, the public stores grew empty, and the colony was faced with starvation.

The change was felt with especial severity at Paramatta, where Grose decided that it was necessary to employ a military official as inspector of public works. John Macarthur, a Lieutenant in the New South Wales Corps, was appointed to this post, and promoted to a Captaincy. Macarthur was a figure typical of the spirit of the new régime. He came out to the colony intending by hook or by crook to make his fortune, and supplemented his military and other official duties by farming on his own account and a good deal of speculative trading in provisions and goods. He was of a quarrelsome nature, and naturally antipathetic to the civilian officials; he remained for years a thorn in the side of successive Governors. With Captain Macarthur in charge at Paramatta, Barrington's position as Constable must have changed rather for the worse. But he stuck manfully to his duties, and early in 1793 had the experience of making his first arrests, at the point of a gun, of two dangerous convicts, named Gray

and Crow. Both of these had taken to the bush after committing robbery, and Crow actually broke gaol after Barrington had safely lodged him 'in the black hole at Sydney'. No elaborate process of judicial outlawry, however, existed in New South Wales, no technical formulæ which could be invalidated by clever lawyers! The gaol-breaker fell again in Barrington's way between Paramatta and Toongabbe, was seized by him a second time, and went in due course to the place of execution, where, says Barrington with unconscious irony, 'he exhibited more weakness and dismay than was expected from such a determined character'.[6]

Barrington was now head of the watch at Paramatta and, as Governor Philip was accustomed to describe it in his cups at home, 'administers justice with an impartial hand'.[7] In proportion as he grew more and more righteous, he inveighed with natural severity against those crimes to which he himself had once been particularly addicted. Hear the one-time keeper of the E.O. table! 'The pernicious vice of gaming, which had rapidly obtained in the settlement, was carried on to such excess among the convicts that many had been known, after losing their provisions, money, and spare clothing, to bet and lose the very clothes from their backs, exhibiting themselves as naked, and as indifferent about it, as the natives of the country. Money was their principal object; for with it they could purchase spirits, which they greedily coveted. They have frequently been seen playing at their

favourite games of Cribbage and All-Fours, for ten dollars a game, and those who were ignorant of those games would be content to toss up for dollars, instead of halfpence. Their meetings were scenes of quarrelling, swearing, and every wickedness that might be expected by a description of people totally destitute of the least particle of shame; but glorying in their depravity. To this dreadful vice in a great measure may be attributed most of the crimes that existed in the colony.' Another subject of natural interest to Barrington was Watches. He noted in his record of the colony's crimes, that in February, 1793, two stolen watches were discovered in the thatch of a convict's hut at Toongabbe, and traced back through a series of gamblers to a thief named Bevan, who had originally taken them in Sydney. 'The information', he adds in words strangely reminiscent of his own trials not so long ago, 'was gained from the people through whose hands the watches had passed; but it being unsupported by any corroborating evidence, the court, though thoroughly convinced of his guilt, was under the necessity of giving him an acquittal.' [8] Bevan was later executed for housebreaking.

Towards the end of 1793 Barrington was able to fulfil a project he had had in mind ever since leaving England. He had promised the kind friend who had accompanied him on board the transport at Long Reach, that if opportunity offered, he would try to send home an account of his experiences in New South Wales. In November he collected together the

jottings and notes he had made, and sent home the materials, which were afterwards published under the title *A Voyage to Botany Bay*. This gave the story of his coming out in the *Albemarle*, with the episode of the mutiny, and also an account of the progress of the colony up to the date of Governor Philip's departure. Barrington had some skill in observation of detail, and some power of describing particular episodes, as the extracts already quoted go to show. But he had no talent for composition and arrangement as a whole; consequently his book is rambling and disconnected, a farrago of anecdotes and incidents with little connecting thread. His enterprising agent or publisher in London, however, soon began to embellish his narrative by filling it out with a few facts and figures borrowed from other writers, particularly the account of the Colony by Captain Tench published during 1793. Thus a book was made, which appeared in 1796 and found a ready market among a public anxious to pick up every scrap of information or scandal obtainable concerning the new settlement. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, however, reviewed it very coldly, remarking: 'Whether this be a genuine work of this celebrated convict or not, it contains nothing that has not been seen before on the subject; and, if it gives a genuine account of Mr. B.'s reformation, we are glad to find that his distance from his native country has put him beyond the reach of temptation to violate her laws and the laws of society in general.' The book was prefaced by a letter from Barrington

in which he promised a further instalment as soon as he could collect some information from his fellow-constable, Wentworth, concerning the progress of the dependency of Norfolk Island.

The principal events in the colony during this period were, at the end of 1793, the arrival of news of the outbreak of war with France, and during 1794, various troubles with a batch of Irish convicts which had been sent out from Cork (Barrington showed no disposition to sympathise with his fellow-countrymen), and, in the autumn, the arrival at Sydney of the Scottish martyrs sentenced for advocating Parliamentary Reform. Barrington in his book refers briefly to the arrival of this forlorn group of Radicals, Muir, Palmer, Gerrald, Skirving and Margarot, but evidently he did not make friends with any of them, and the party was soon broken up by death and escape. And anyhow, they were all too far away from England to read the special mock Jacobin number which *The Times* brought out on September 6, 1794, under the title of *The New Times* (First Year of the Republic, Saturday, June 10, 1800) with a guillotine, decapitated head and liberty-cap for its coat-of-arms. One of the items of news reported concerning the 'British National Convention' ran thus:

'Citizen Barrington, Representative from Botany Bay, was yesterday detected picking the pocket of the President of the National Convention, of a gold snuff-box. He was reprimanded, but defended what he had done, on principles of equality.'

Actually, the real Barrington was being kept, by

the anarchical state of the colony, hard at a very different kind of work. 'Many irregularities and robberies' he says 'being frequently committed in and about Paramatta, my post as Peace Officer became very troublesome; being obliged to be ever on the watch to suppress disorders, and apprehend all suspicious and straggling persons who could not render a good account of themselves.' He succeeded by his activities in keeping in the good books of Lieutenant-Governor Grose, who, before his recall to England in 1795, made him an additional grant of 30 acres of land, bringing his property now up to a total of 60 acres.[9] Grose contrived, during his administration, not merely to intensify opposition between the civilians and military, but also to antagonise the clergy, in the person of the principal chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson, who complained bitterly of the Major's neglect of public worship in the colony. Johnson was reinforced in March, 1794, by the arrival of the Rev. Samuel Marsden to act as his assistant chaplain. The latter was detailed off to look after Paramatta and Toongabbe, and later became a magistrate and one of the superintendents of the public works. The Rev. Marsden was active in building churches and establishing schools, but he also became 'the best practical farmer in the colony', a keen student of the possibilities of sheep-breeding and wool production. Now Barrington, as we have seen, knew the value of being 'in' with the professors of religion. He became friends with the Rev. Marsden, and insensibly lent his support to the

element of civilian authority in the settlement. Another official with whom he was on friendly terms was Richard Atkins, who had been appointed by Governor Philip Registrar of the Vice-Admiralty Court at Sydney.

The interregnum under Major Grose was now brought to a close by the arrival of Governor Hunter in September, 1795. By the end of that year a substantial improvement began to be noticed in the condition of the colony. There was more food, and a reduction took place in the death-rate. No doubt it was under the stimulus of this cheerful prospect that a group of the more decent among the convicts now brought before the Governor a project for opening a playhouse in Sydney. His consent being given, a building was quickly erected at a cost of over £100, and opened under the management of one John Sparrow: the first performance was given on Saturday, January 16, 1796, several male and female convicts, including one who had been an actor, playing the parts. In licensing this performance the Governor warned the performers and their audience that 'the slightest impropriety would be noticed, and a repetition punished by the banishment of their company to the other settlements'. No improprieties took place inside the theatre, but a number of convicts who stayed away from the second performance spent their time in breaking into the huts of those that attended it, and robbing them. As for the actual performances, they were highly successful. The programme comprised a play called

'The Revenge' and an entertainment called 'The Hotel'. Collins tells us that the convicts 'had fitted up the house with more theatrical propriety than could have been expected, and their performance was far above contempt. Their motto was modest and well chosen—'We cannot command success, but will endeavour to deserve it.' Of their dresses the greater part were made by themselves; but we understood that some veteran articles from the York Theatre were among the best that made their appearance'.[10]

Barrington is nowhere mentioned by name as having been present on this occasion, or as having had anything to do with the theatricals. But by one of the strangest freaks of literary fraud, his name has been inseparably linked with a supposed Prologue that was reputed to have been spoken before the curtain went up. Two lines of this Prologue have passed into a proverb: and it is by his supposed authorship of these lines that the name of Barrington has been kept vaguely alive in the memories of a few well-read persons. The Barrington Prologue is not mentioned either in Collins' *Account of the English Colony* or in Barrington's own *Voyage to New South Wales*, both of which refer to the opening of the theatre. But Barrington's publishers in London soon began to embellish the rather scrappy notes he sent home to them, and produce new works under his name which contained gross plagiarisms upon other writers. Among these new works there appeared in 1802 a *History of New South Wales*, with a flamboyant

preface by Barrington (which we may hope was falsely fathered on him) stating that 'though alas! he has formerly wandered in the paths of error, he trusts, that now he has felt the kind hand of Patronising Favour, he may be looked upon as a Man endeavouring to Do Well'. In this book for the first time we find the supposed Prologue attached to the account of the theatrical performance in 1796.

'The following curious Prologue was spoken at the theatre, which is certainly *particularly descriptive* of the theatrical corps:

PROLOGUE

From distant climes, o'er wide-spread seas, we come,
Though not with much éclat or beat of drum:
True patriots all: for, be it understood,
We left our country for our country's good:
No private views disgrac'd our generous zeal,
What urg'd our travels was, our country's weal;
And none will doubt, but that our emigration
Had prov'd most useful to the British Nation.
But, you inquire, what could our breasts inflame
With this new passion for Theatric fame;
What, in the practice of our former days,
Could shape our talents to exhibit plays?
Your patience, Sirs, some observation made
You'll grant us equal to the Scenic trade.
He, who to midnight ladders is no stranger,
You'll own will make an admirable Ranger.
To seek Macheath we have not far to roam,
And sure, in Filch, I shall be quite at home.
Unrivall'd there, none will dispute my claim
To high pre-eminence, and exalted fame.
As oft on Gadshill we have ta'en our stand,
When ' 'twas so dark you could not see your hand,'
Some truebred Falstaff we may hope to start,
Who, when well bolster'd, well will play his part.
The scene to vary, we shall try, in time,
To treat you with a little pantomime.

Here light and easy Columbines are found,
And well-try'd Harlequins with us abound;
From durance vile our precious selves to keep,
We oft had recourse to th'flying leap:
To a black face have sometimes ow'd escape,
And Hounslow Heath has prov'd the worth of crape.
But how, you ask, can we e'er hope to soar
Above these scenes, and rise to Tragic lore?
Too oft, alas, we've forc'd th'unwilling tear,
And petrify'd the heart with real fear.
Macbeth a harvest of applause will reap,
For some of us, I fear, have "murdered sleep":
His lady, too, with grace will sleep and talk,
Our females have been us'd at night to walk.
Sometimes, indeed, so various is our art,
An actor may improve and mend his part:
"Give me a horse!" bawls Richard, like a drone.
We'll find a man would help himself to one.
Grant us your favour, put us to the test,
To gain your smiles we'll do our very best;
And, without dread of future turnkey Lockits,
Thus, in an honest way, still pick your pockets.'

The first thing that will be said of this clever piece is that if Barrington did not write it, he certainly ought to have written it! It is not in the least surprising that readers of his book, and subsequent historians of Australia, for over a century supposed that Barrington must have been its author. Every line fits in with what we know of his character and humour. But alas! the fiction was exposed by the accidental discovery of a Sydney book-collector, about the year 1905. Mr. Alfred Lee chanced to come across a book entitled *Original Poems and Translations . . . chiefly by Susanna Watts*, published by F. and C. Rivington (London) in 1802. This little book included pieces by other persons than Susanna

Watts, among them, on page 84, being a poem described as follows: 'The Newspapers having announced that a Theatre was to be opened at Sydney Town, Botany Bay, and Plays to be performed by the Convicts, this Prologue is supposed to have been spoken by the celebrated Mr. B-rr-ngton, on that occasion, 1801. By a Gentleman.' [11] A pencilled note to the poem gives the name of its author as Hy. Carter, Esq., while on the back of the title-page of the book is another note saying that none of its contents had ever been published before. Henry Carter died in 1806, and is described as 'a gentleman of considerable literary attainments and great benevolence'.

From the date of the book it is clear that Carter's skit refers to the opening of a *later* theatre at Sydney in 1800. But the enterprising publisher of Barrington's *History of New South Wales* in 1802 stole Carter's Prologue, altered several lines to make it fit better, and inserted it in the description of the 1796 Sydney theatre! So the legend was created, to be repeated in the 1810 edition of the *History*, and to be copied by innumerable later writers down to the editors of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Regretfully we have now to abandon the legend, and to give to the unknown Mr. Carter the admiration we should like to have kept for The Prince of Pickpockets!

We next hear of Barrington in the summer of 1796, playing a minor part in the tangled political controversy between the civilian and military elements

in the colony. Almost the first act of Governor Hunter upon taking over the administration was to re-establish the civilian over the military authority, a step which was fully warranted by the disgraceful condition into which the settlement had been allowed to drift by the latter. According to Hunter himself, 'the conduct of this part of the New South Wales Corps has been the most violent and outrageous that was ever heard of by any British regiment whatever'—a fairly strong condemnation! The outward symbol of the change to civilian rule was the restoration of the Judge-Advocate in his judicial functions, and the supersession of courts-martial. Atkins was appointed to the post, a choice not altogether wise, inasmuch as he did not know much law, and was polemical and provocative in his actions. At once, indeed, a fierce feud broke out between Atkins and Macarthur, who took upon himself, as commander of the troops at Paramatta, to oppose systematically any attempts of the civilian authority to restore discipline in the Corps. Constant quarrels went on between these two throughout 1796. Thus in the middle of July Atkins wrote to Macarthur complaining that the corporal of the guard had been detected stealing turnips from the Governor's garden. Then Macarthur retorted by accusing Atkins himself of a whole series of crimes, including fraudulent drawing of bills, drunkenness ('his being frequently in a state of the most shameful intoxication, but more particularly on the night of the 19th August, when at an early hour of the morn-

ing he was seen exposing himself in the streets'), abusing a creditor, and highway robbery! These wholesale charges reduced the Judge-Advocate to a most undignified display of temper. He wrote a long letter to Macarthur, styling him an incendiary and a profiteer who had made a fortune of £8,000 by shady methods, and indignantly repudiated the accusations which he had made. 'On this subject, viper, you bite a file'—so wrote the Colony's chief judicial officer. 'The day of retribution will come—and, believe me, it is not far off—when you will be dragged forward by the strong arm of justice to public view as a monster of society, the betrayer of private conversation to answer your own malicious ends, the assassin of all that constitutes true honour.' Not content with refuting Macarthur's charges in detail, Atkins determined to collect testimonials to his own conduct and send them in to the Governor to strengthen his case. The Rev. Marsden, Thos. Arndell (the surgeon) and Barrington were three of those to whom he applied for these testimonials. Barrington's was addressed to the Chaplain, and couched in his most urbane style, showing that he had in no wise lost his epistolary fluency:

August, 1796

DEAR SIR,

In obedience to your requisition to know whether in waiting on R. Atkins Esq., J.P., with reports or other official duty I have at any time found him so inebriated as to be unable to proceed to investiga-

tion, permit me to say that I recollect no such instance. On such occasions he has generally appeared to me to be actuated by a lively zeal for the public welfare. And I think I may take the liberty to add that few men here or elsewhere have more accurate or more extensive notions of the duties of justice and benevolence than the gentleman alluded to.

I am, etc.

GEO. BARRINGTON.[12]

The controversy between Atkins and Macarthur dragged on indecisively, till it merged in the larger attack the latter was making against Governor Hunter himself. Macarthur returned to England for a while, and played Philip Francis to Hunter's Hastings, eventually succeeding in getting his enemy recalled home and reprimanded.

But as a result of all this Barrington found himself in high favour with Hunter. That 'pleasant, sensible old man', as he was described by a visitor in 1798, considered that Barrington deserved further promotion and encouragement, and in the course of a long dispatch which he wrote home to Under-Secretary King from Sydney on August 20, 1796, he gave expression to the following remarkable tribute to the ex-convict's attractive personality:

'I will, whilst I am writing, mention one man to you who, to speak my sentiments of him, I must say appears to me to be one of the most zealous on public duty, and one of the most exemplary in private

life of any within the colony—Mr. Geo. Barrington. Well has he since in this country deserv'd for his services some extraordinary encouragements, but we have none to give. I wish, if he continues after his time is expir'd, I could do something which might induce him to stay (it is near expir'd), but he has not hinted any intention of quitting the country. I am however of opinion he will, for he cannot obtain as much here as will purchase cloaths for his back. He has constantly done the duty of chief constable at Paramatta, and in that office has been indefatigable in keeping the public peace and in guarding private property. It is much to be regretted that a man of this description, because once having offended the laws of his country, should be ever afterwards consider'd as unworthy its favour.' [13]

A month later these striking sentences were translated into terms of concrete action. Thomas Clark, a free man who had originally come out with Governor Philip to serve as superintendent of convicts, had been asking ever since May, when his house had been broken into and robbed, to be allowed to return home to England. Accordingly at the beginning of September Barrington was released by Hunter from the conditions which qualified the terms of his pardon, in 1792, and on the 13th he was officially appointed to succeed Clark as superintendent of the convicts, with a salary of £50 per annum.

For Barrington this promotion meant the end of his long struggle for rehabilitation, and the achievement of the summit of his ambition. 'The Governor',

he tells us, 'was pleased to compliment me on the faithful discharge of my duty, the integrity and uniform uprightness of my conduct, and my general behaviour during my whole residence in the colony, which perfectly obliterated every trace of my former indiscretions. It was such a friend as this to whom I alluded on a solemn occasion, previous to my leaving England: this was the 'generous and powerful man' I so much needed in my youthful days, to come forward and say, "Barrington, you have some abilities, which may be of service to yourself and the public. I feel for your situation, and will place you in a condition to try the sincerity of your intentions: and as long as you act with diligence and integrity, you shall not want for countenance and relief." The above flattering eulogiums of his Excellency, Governor Hunter, the station I fill, and the consideration and friendship I experience from the most respectable persons in the colony, prove that, in my address to Baron Eyre, I was ingenuous and sincere.' With these words Barrington closes the second volume of his *Voyage to New South Wales*, which was published in 1801. We can be sure of the genuineness of little or nothing attributed to his pen thereafter.

He was, at the time of his promotion, more prosperous in his farming than most of the settlers in the colony, with a flock of thirty-eight sheep, fourteen goats, a cow, half a dozen pigs and many poultry in his possession. To his eyes 'the colony now began to assume the appearance of being able to supply itself with respect to the necessaries of life, there being

near six thousand acres of land in cultivation, and all the stores abundantly filled. In the houses of individuals were to be found most of the comforts, and not a few of the luxuries of life, for which we were indebted to our intercourse with India; and our early years of toil, famine, and difficulty, were now exchanged for an era of plenty, ease and pleasure.'[14] He gradually added to his land by purchase, so that by 1801 he figures in the government return as holding no less than 110 acres, 60 by grant and 50 bought from other settlers. Part of the additional land appears to have been situated on the North Boundary of the colony, beyond Paramatta—perhaps near the home of the friend he was visiting when he found Yeariana. For in 1798 the Rev. Rowland Hassall, a missionary sent out by the London Missionary Society, was given by Hunter a grant of land in the same neighbourhood, and 'went to live at a house that was more convenient, belonging to Mr. Barrington, in the North Boundary, where I was robbed of nearly all I had'.[15] Hassall was 'beaten and used very ill' by the housebreakers on this occasion, but afterwards he turned the house into a chapel where services were held and sermons preached every Sunday.

Barrington continued to figure as High Constable of Paramatta in the government returns year after year down to the end of 1800. His function was to superintend the duties of the subordinate constables, and to take care that they duly obeyed the orders of the civil police. He remained as good-natured and

friendly as ever. Thus John Black, the purser of a convict ship called the *Lady Shore*, visited him in the summer of 1798 and wrote home afterwards to his father: 'Barrington is a man of very genteel address. I have drank a glass of grog in his house. He is head constable at Paramatta, and is much respected. He is a pleasant, conversable man.' The mention of 'grog', however, is ominous. The desperate efforts made by the Governors during the colony's early years to suppress spirit-drinking had by now proved unsuccessful: spirits were illicitly distilled on shore, and also smuggled off the ships which touched at Port Jackson; and Barrington began to fall a victim to the habit of drinking more than was good for him. He had never been physically a strong man. The old complaint—asthma it was called then, but it may have been tuberculosis—which he had contracted at the time of his attempted suicide in 1778, clung to him; he grew thinner and thinner until, as Collins records in July, 1799, 'his health was visibly declining'.

His farming too was not so successful as it had been. In 1799 he 'appeared to have twenty acres of ground in wheat', but by 1801 he had no more than eight acres under wheat and maize, out of a total of sixteen acres cleared for arable. During 1800 he had a slight difference of opinion with the authorities (Governor Hunter had now been succeeded by Governor King) over the amount of convict-labour he was employing. Settlers were by this time expected to pay government for the labour they

used; and Barrington, it was stated, had had three men working for him, but owned to one only. He therefore stood indebted to the Government to the extent of £130, but probably payment was never insisted on. He was now obviously past his duties as Head Constable, and in General Orders dated Friday, November 28, 1800, his retirement was announced. 'Mr. George Barrington having, from infirmity, resigned his situation as head constable, and in consequence of his great diligence and good behaviour since he has been in that situation, from his first arrival in the colony, the Governor had directed that half his salary be continued to him, and John Jennings is appointed head constable at Paramatta in his stead.' [16]

With his pension of £25 and his farm to support him, he lingered on for another three years or more, emaciated to a skeleton, a sad wreck of his former self. He is described in 1802 as having given himself up to excessive drinking, but also as being 'very comfortably settled in the town of Paramatta', while his two farms near by were worked for him by four servants allowed him by Government.[17] His pension had apparently been increased by then to £50, opposite which figure his name appears for the last time on the Government's roll of superintendents dated December 31, 1803. The foreboding clause was added, 'whose pay is to cease at his demise', showing that he was near his end. So, some time in 1804, the ex-pickpocket passed away, unrecorded by his fellow-Australians, but leaving to English-

men the memory of a personality that became a legend for Regency gossips, and put profits into the pockets of several booksellers who were smart enough to attach his name to their spicy stories of the Antipodes or the underworld of London.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE various short accounts of Barrington's career as a pickpocket, which appeared between 1790 and about 1820, overlap very much both in their contents and their titles. They will be found referred to by brief titles indicated as follows:

1. *The Genuine Life and Trial of George Barrington from his Birth in June, 1755, to the Time of his Conviction at the Old Bailey in September, 1790, etc.* (London, 1790), pp. 48. Is referred to as *Genuine Life and Trial* (1790).

2. *Memoirs of George Barrington from his Birth in 1755 to his Last Conviction at the Old Bailey on Friday, the 17th of September, 1790* (London, 1790), pp. 115. Is referred to as *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790).

3. *The Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance from his Birth to the Present Time, including the following Trials, etc.* (London, 1790), pp. 40. Fine engraved frontispiece showing Barrington picking the pocket of J. Brown, Esq. Is referred to as *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790).

4. *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of George Barrington* (Darlington, 1795), pp. 8. Is referred to as *Life and Extraordinary Adventures* (1795).

5. *The Life, Times and Adventures of George Barrington, the Celebrated Thief and Pickpocket, etc.* Second edition (London, *c.* 1820). Crude engravings. Worthless contents. Is referred to as *Life, Times and Adventures* (1820).

6. *The Life of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance from his Birth to the Present Time, including the following Trials, etc.* (London, 1792), pp. 42. Is referred to as *Life of George Barrington* (1792).

It should also be noticed that Barrington's *Voyage to New South Wales* came out in two parts or volumes, the title of the first being *A Voyage to Botany Bay*, which I have used. Barrington is also supposed to have been the author of *The History of New South Wales* (1802 and 1810), most of which is, in fact, borrowed from other writers.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] George Barrington, *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, 1803, p. 68, footnote.

[2] *The Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790) give June, 1755.

[3] *The Life of George Barrington* (1792).

[4] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 4.

[5] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland* (1776–9).

[6] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 2.

[7] *Life of George Barrington* (1792).

[8] *Life of George Barrington* (1792), p. 3.

[9] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 4.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[13] *The Frauds and Cheats of London Detected*, by the celebrated George Barrington, etc. (1802), p. 50. The preface, at least, is written in his style, though the rest is but a hash-up of earlier books.

[14] *Thieving Detected*, etc., addressed to Sir John Fielding in 1777.

[15] *Frauds and Cheats*, etc., p. 51.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[17] *Life of George Barrington* (1792), p. 7.

[18] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 28.

[19] The text of this was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1779, under the title of 'An Old College Exercise. Author unknown.'

[20] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 24.

[21] *Public Advertiser*, September 18, 1790.

[22] Colquhoun, *Police of the Metropolis*, p. 228.

[23] Malcolm, *Manners and Customs of London during the Eighteenth Century* (1810), p. 204.

[24] *Police of the Metropolis*, pp. 279–80.

[25] 'Whenever the person is sensible of the thing at *the time*, that takes off the capital part.'—*London Sessions Papers*, 1790, p. 38.

[26] According to the alternative account of Barrington's youth (see *Life of George Barrington*, 1792) he was still in Dublin in 1774, when he began to rush into dissipation at the age of 16. He contracted an intimacy with a female named Ranby, whose extravagance led him into criminal courses. He was first arrested on suspicion of picking the pocket of an Irish M.P. at the theatre in Dublin. 'Several curious instruments were found on him, which at first appeared to be constructed for the purpose of facilitating the art of diving.' Barrington was soon released for want of evidence. Later his employer, Jones, charged him with stealing a £20 note, but believed his protestations of innocence. Next, Ranby and Barrington were arrested together at Rider's Theatre for picking the pocket of Lord M-m-s. A watch which was missing was found on Barrington's person. Both were committed to gaol, but liberated after a short confinement because Lord M-m-s had known Captain Barrington, George's reputed father, and desired to avoid scandal. After this episode, Barrington sailed as surgeon's mate on a ship bound from Dublin to the West Indies, returning to London in another ship which arrived at the beginning of 1775.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 23.

[2] *Life of George Barrington* (1792).

[3] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, November 1–3, 1775.

[4] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 40.

[5] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 27.

[6] Wraxall's *Memoirs*, i, 328.

[7] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 41.

[8] *Life of George Barrington* (1792), p. 6.

[9] That his technical education needed completing we may infer from the fate of an attempt which Barrington made about this time on the person of Miss S., also a pupil of 'the celebrated Miss West'. This affair happened in one of the avenues to the old Opera-House. 'As the company were going in, they stopped suddenly short, on an alarm of fire, when Miss S. laid fast hold on the hand of Barrington in her pocket (who was not then so experienced as herself), and gave him up to the soldiers, who kicked him from one to another, and abandoned him to the mob, who treated him very roughly. Barrington was at that time a boy, though possessing a fine genius for pocket-picking. Miss S. was an adept in the science, and one of the first shop-lifters in London.'—*Public Advertiser*, September 3, 1790.

[10] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), p. 9.
[11] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, November 1–3, 1775.
[12] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 42.
[13] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, November 1–3, 1775.
[14] *Morning Chronicle*, November 2, 1775.
[15] *Morning Post*, November 2, 1775.
[16] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), p. 10.
[17] *Scots Magazine*, June, 1775.
[18] *Morning Chronicle*, January 19, 1776.
[19] *Morning Post*, January 20, 1776.
[20] *Ibid.*, January 22, 1776.
[21] *London Sessions Papers*, 1776.
[22] *Life of George Barrington* (1792), p. 7.
[23] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), p. 81.
[24] *London Sessions Papers*, 1776.
[25] *Ibid.*, 1777.
[26] *London Chronicle*, January 16–18, 1777.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1] *Parliamentary Reports*, Vol. XXXV (1779), p. 16. Duncan Campbell's evidence.

[2] *Public Bills*, Vol. X (1778–9). Observations on the Bill of 1779, p. 8. From November 1, 1769, to November 1, 1776, the annual number of persons sentenced to transportation was 936.

[3] 16*th Geo. III*, Cap. XLIII. 'An Act to authorise, for a limited time, the punishment by hard labour of offenders who, for certain crimes, are or shall become liable to be transported to any of His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations.' See also Colquhoun's *Police of the Metropolis*, p. 320.

[4] *Commons' Journal*, XXXV, p. 694.

[5] *Public Bills*, Vol. X. Observations on the Bill of 1779, p. 4.

[6] *Commons' Journal*, XXXVI, p. 926. Report by Sir Charles Bunbury's Committee of Enquiry into the Working of the Act of 1776. Duncan Campbell's evidence.

[7] *Parliamentary Reports*, Vol. XXV, p. 12. Evidence of Dr. William Smith.

[8] *Commons' Journal*, XXXVI, p. 926. Duncan Campbell's evidence.

[9] *Ibid.* John Howard's evidence. Also Howard's *State of the Prisons* (1777), p. 75, footnote.

[10] *Parliamentary Reports*, Vol. XXXV, p. 9. Duncan Campbell's evidence.

[11] Howard's *State of the Prisons* (1777), p. 75, footnote.

[12] *Parliamentary Reports*, Vol. XXXV, p. 9. Duncan Campbell's evidence.

[13] *Commons' Journal*, XXXVI, p. 926. Duncan Campbell's evidence.

[14] Both gave evidence before the Parliamentary Committee.

[15] *Commons' Journal*, XXXVI, p. 926.

[16] *Parliamentary Reports*, XXXV, p. 12. Return of Convicts.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 24. Recommendations of Committee.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 11. Evidence of Dodo Ecken, Esq.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 11. Evidence of Duncan Campbell.

[20] Observations on the Bill of 1779, p. 5.

[21] *Parliamentary Reports*, Vol. XXXV (1779), p. 10.

[22] Colquhoun, *Police of the Metropolis*, p. 331. From January 1, 1789, to January 1, 1792, five hundred convicts at Woolwich performed 260,440 days' work, valued at 1*s.* a day=£13,022. This was estimated to be equal to three-fifths of the cost of their maintenance.

[23] *Parliamentary Reports*, Vol. XXXV (1779), p. 18.

[24] Hepworth Dixon, *John Howard* (1849), p. 254.

[25] *Public Bills*, 1778–9, Vol. X.

[26] *Commons' Journal*, XXXIX, p. 1040. The new supervisors appointed on March 2, 1781, were Sir Gilbert Elliott, Bt., Sir Charles Bunbury, Bt., and T. Bowdler, M.D.

[27] *Public Bills*, 1778–9, Vol. X, p. 33.

[28] Howard, *State of the Prisons*, 4th Edn. (1792), p. 464.

[29] Mayhew, *Criminal Prisons of London* (1862), p. 215. The table of convicts' dietary in 1930 was kindly supplied by Mr. Alexander Patterson.

[30] The *Justitia* was finally discharged from service and broken up on March 7, 1791, to be replaced by a fresh vessel bearing the same name (Entry Books, *Home Office Papers*, 13, Vol. 8).

[31] Colquhoun, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

[32] Colquhoun, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] Vaux's *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 109 (1819 edition).

[2] *Life of George Barrington* (1792), p. 9. The name of the victim is given as David Brown Dignam, one of 'Mr. Campbell's academy'. But Dignam did not arrive at the 'Hulks' till April, while Miss West was herself sentenced in February.

[3] *London Sessions Papers*, 1777.

[4] *Morning Post*, February 21, 1777. But the *Gazetteer* of the same date says 'she was neatly dressed in mourning'.

[5] *Morning Chronicle*, February 22, 1777. The *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 13, says she was tried in all seven times at the Old Bailey, being four times acquitted and thrice found guilty.

[6] *London Sessions Papers*, 1777.

[7] *Scots Magazine*, May, 1777.

[8] *Ibid.*, July, 1777.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), pp. 82–3.

[11] *A Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 50.

[12] *Life of George Barrington* (1792), p. 11.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Morning Chronicle*, June 6, 1778.

[15] *Ibid.*, March 16, 1778.

[16] *Gazetteer*, March 17, 1778.

[17] *London Sessions Papers*, 1778.

[18] *Gazetteer*, June 10, 1778.

[19] *London Sessions Papers*, 1778.

[20] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 13.

[21] *Public Advertiser*, November 12, 1776.

[22] *London Chronicle*, June 9, 1778.

[23] *Daily Advertiser*, June 9, 1778.

[24] *Gazetteer*, June 9, 1778.

[25] *Morning Chronicle*, September 30, 1778.

[26] *Ibid.*, October 1, 1778.

[27] *A Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 51.

[28] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 17.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

[30] *A Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 51. I have been unable to trace any knight or baronet of these initials who would fit the case.

[31] *A Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 54.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[33] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), p. 37.

[34] *Morning Herald*, January 21, 1783.

[35] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), pp. 18–20.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), p. 94.

[2] *London Sessions Papers*, 1784.

[3] This well-known Whig politician, follower of Charles James Fox, entered Parliament during this year.

[4] *London Sessions Papers*, 1785.

[5] *Morning Chronicle*, April 9, 1785.

[6] *Chronicles of Bow Street Police Office*, Vol. I, p. 134.

[7] See *Gentleman's Magazine*, January, 1787, for list of theatrical performances.

[8] *London Sessions Papers*, 1789.

[9] *London Chronicle*, January 20, 1787.

[10] Hanger's *Life, Adventures and Opinions* (1801), Vol. I, p. 181.

[11] *Chronicles of Bow Street Police Office.*

[12] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), pp. 95–6. This gives the details of his wanderings before his arrest at Newcastle.

[13] *European Magazine*, 1788.

[14] *Chronicles of Bow Street Police Office*, Vol. I, p. 134.

[15] *Morning Post*, July 26, 1788.

[16] *Memoirs of George Barrington* (1790), p. 97.

[17] Apparently he had recovered his self-respect again by this time, as the *Morning Post*, July 26, declared that 'his dress and address were alike—elegant and insinuating'.

[18] *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790), pp. 26–7.

[19] *Morning Post*, November 20, 1788.

[20] *Morning Chronicle*, November 20, 1788.

[21] *Ibid.*, November 26, 1788.

[22] *Morning Post*, November 27, 1788.

[23] Printed in *Memoirs of George Barrington, containing every Remarkable Circumstance* (1790). So far as I can trace, it never appeared in the *Morning Chronicle.*

[24] *European Magazine*, 1789.

[25] *London Sessions Papers*, 1789.

[26] *Public Advertiser*, December 11, 1789.

[27] *Morning Post*, December 11, 1789.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1] *London Chronicle*, December 12, 1789.

[2] *Morning Post*, December 16, 1789.

[3] *Ibid.*, December 18, 1789.

[4] *Ibid.*, December 23, 1789.

[5] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 58.

[6] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. II, p. 782. George Barrington to a gentleman in the county of York, July 1, 1791.

[7] *London Sessions Papers*, 1790.

[8] *Public Advertiser*, September 2, 1790.
[9] *London Chronicle*, September 16, 1790.
[10] *Public Advertiser*, September 18, 1790.
[11] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 72.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

[1] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1790), p. 19.
[2] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. II, p. 771. George Barrington to his wife, March 2, 1791.
[3] *Home Office Records*, 10 (1), p. 433.
[4] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. II, p. 771.
[5] *A Voyage to Botany Bay.*
[6] *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I.
[7] Collins, *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales.*
[8] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1796), p. 48.
[9] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. II, p. 781.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 771.
[11] *A Voyage to Botany Bay*, p. 23.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[13] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. II, p. 447. Robert Cock to the Duke of Leeds, May 13, 1791.
[14] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1796), p. 25.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.
[16] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. II, p. 783.
[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 516. A Proposition for conveying convicts to New South Wales.
[18] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1796), p. 33.
[19] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 505.
[20] If Barrington really arrived in the *Active*, this vessel came into Port Jackson on September 26.
[21] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1796), pp. 49–50.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[23] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. II, p. 794. Journal of George Thompson.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 465. State of the Settlements at Sydney, Paramatta, and Norfolk Island, March 18, 1792.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 817. A Soldier's Letter.

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 560. State of the Settlements at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island, November 18, 1791.

[27] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 775. A Letter from Sydney, March 24, 1791.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 51. Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas to Lieut.-Governor Grose, 1783.

[29] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 536. Governor Philip to Lord Grenville, November 5, 1791.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 537.

[31] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 761–2. Extract from a Letter from an Officer, April, 1790.

[32] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 327. Governor Philip to Lord Sydney.

[33] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 710. Daniel Southwell to Rev. W. Butler, April 14, 1790.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 770.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 814. Thomas Daveney to a friend at Wycombe, July 1, 1794.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 807. A Letter from Toongabbe printed in the *Dublin Chronicle* of July 5, 1795, and dated November 30, 1792.

[37] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 154. Governor Philip to Under-Secretary Nepean, July 9, 1788.

[38] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 795. Journal of George Thompson, 1792.

[39] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1796), Part 1, p. 109.

[40] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 598. Governor Philip to the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, March 19, 1792.

[41] Collins, *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales.*

[42] *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, by Captain Watkin Tench, p. 40, footnote.

[43] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 645. Governor Philip to the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, October 2, 1792.

[44] Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

[45] Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 156. Tench, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[46] Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[47] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. I, Part 2. Governor Philip to Lord Sydney, February 12, 1790.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 133. Governor Philip to Lord Sydney, May 15, 1788.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

[1] *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson* (1793), by Captain Watkin Tench, pp. 157–8. Tench visited Barrington on December 8. His statement that Barrington had been between two and three months in the colony bears out the statement of Collins that Barrington arrived at Port Jackson in the transport *Active* (September 26) rather than in the *Albemarle* (October 13).

[2] *An Account of a Voyage to New South Wales*, Preface.

[3] *A Voyage to Botany Bay* (1795), pp. 55–6.

[4] *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, by David Collins, Vol. I, p. 244.

[5] *London Chronicle*, August 28, 1798.

[6] *A Voyage to Botany Bay*, Part II, p. 23.

[7] *Dublin Chronicle*, June 4, 1793.

[8] *A Voyage to Botany Bay*, Part II, p. 30.

[9] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. IV, p. 648. List of Civil and Military Officers holding land in 1801.

[10] *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, Vol. I, p. 448.

[11] *The Australian Encyclopædia* (1925), Vol. I, p. 139.

[12] *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I.

[13] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 588.

[14] *A Voyage to New South Wales*, by George Barrington (1801), p. 85.

[15] *H.R.N.S.W.*, Vol. IV, p. 74. Letter from Rev. Rowland Hassall to the London Missionary Society, dated April 22, 1800, from Paramatta.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

[17] *Saunders News Letters*, October 8, 1802.

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